



Procurement of intellectual services

Terms of reference

Adapted procedure

Pursuant to Article R2123-1 of the Public Procurement Code

Object

Conducting "dry-run" tests of the private forest sector in Honduras based on FLEGT legality matrices

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of abbreviations

1	General information about the service context.....	4
1.1	Context of the EU FLEGT APV programme.....	4
1.2	General and specific objectives of the EU VPA FLEGT programme.....	5
1.3	Governance and contracting authority	7
2	Context of the FLEGT VPA in Honduras.....	7
3	Service Description.....	9
3.1	Context: white tests in APV processes	9
3.2	Objective of the mission.....	11
3.3	Main tasks expected from the service provider	12
3.4	deliverables	17
3.5	Indicative calendar and deadlines.....	19
4	Services to be provided by the client	20
5	Communication	20
6	Indication of key positions and expected profiles.....	20
7	Estimated budget	23

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AFD Agence Française de Développement

ALA Facility Africa and Latin America Facility

CSO Civil society organisations

DG-ENV Directorate-General for the Environment

DG-INTPA Directorate-General for International Partnerships

EFI European Forest Institute

European Union

EUTR EU Timber Regulation

FSO Forest sector operators

FLEGT Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade

GFC Guyana Forestry Commission

GNP Gross National Product

ICF Forest Conservation Institute

JIC Joint Implementation Committee

NGO Non-Governmental Organization

REDD+ Reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation

SETAVA Technical Secretariat of the VPA

SIIAVA Interinstitutional Secretariat for the implementation of the FLEGT VPA

SMEs Small and medium-sized enterprises

TLAS Timber Legality Verification System

VPA Voluntary partnership agreements

1 GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE SERVICE CONTEXT

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE EU FLEGT APV PROGRAMME

In 2003, as part of a bilateral dialogue between the European Union (EU) and the main tropical producing countries aimed at strengthening forest governance, the involvement of civil society in the implementation of their forest policies and the elimination of illegal logging through the formalisation of their wood-forest value chains, the EU adopted the Action Plan for Forest Law Enforcement, governance and trade (FLEGT).

The EU's FLEGT action plan *protects* tropical forests from the devastating effects of illegal logging. Forests are home to 90% of the world's biodiversity, regulate water quality, and mitigate climate change by absorbing and storing nearly half of global terrestrial carbon. Trade in *illegal logging* of tropical forests has led to a reduction of more than 30 per cent in the price of tropical timber on international markets. Interpol estimates that 50-90% of tropical logging is illegal. In 2018, the number of financial transactions related to illegal trade in timber products was estimated at more than \$100 billion (Interpol, April 2019). Illegal logging is regularly the subject of media campaigns and damages the image of tropical timber, which represents only a marginal part of the global forest value chain (1% of global forest production) and erodes the confidence of European consumers. In tropical countries, it affects both the integrity of forest ecosystems and the populations that depend on forests, which are considered to be among the world's poorest. Voluntary Partnership Agreements (VPAs) are a key element of the EU's Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (FLEGT) action plan to tackle illegal logging. A VPA aims to ensure that timber and timber products imported into the EU from a partner country comply with that country's legislation.

To do this, a partner country must first decide which parts of its national legal framework it will use to define legality for VPA purposes. The country must also have a system to ensure legal compliance and issue legal products with FLEGT licences, and describe it in the text and annexes of the VPA. In most cases, a country will rely on existing systems to achieve this. However, the implementation of VPAs has been hampered by several institutional and technical requirements. To date, only one country has been authorized to issue FLEGT licences (Indonesia) and eight other countries have committed to implement a VPA (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Ghana, Guyana, Honduras, Liberia, Republic of Congo and Vietnam). Currently, these eight countries are part of the EU FLEGT AOV programme and at different stages of development.

In order to ensure the credibility of the whole process and enable VPAs to reach their full potential, it is necessary that the EU continues to support their implementation. The main constraints are country-specific, but generally concern the implementation of a timber legality assurance system (TLAS), which relies on a complete national chain of transparency led by the administration of the country. This poses many technical, financial, organizational and institutional challenges due to the changes in practices imposed on many historical or newly associated actors of the forest value chain. The implementation of a VPA therefore requires substantial investment and continuous, well-targeted technical and financial support. In this context (2021-2025), the French Development Agency (AFD), through a delegation of EU funds, is implementing a program aimed at supporting the eight (8) countries

mentioned above, recognized by the EU as its most committed partners in the fight against illegal logging, in the implementation of their VPAs. This programme will complement and track support for FLEGT processes by international organisations, civil society organisations, multilateral agencies and EU Member States in current VPA partner countries, including:

- Action programmes that provide assistance to governments and financial support through calls for proposals to other stakeholders (CSOs and private sector), funded by the EU or other donors. In particular, synergies will be encouraged with the VPA FTA mechanism, the "Forests for the Future" mechanism (F4) (Led by the Environment and Sustainable Natural Resources Unit of the Directorate-General for International Partnerships [INTPA.F.2], which aims to promote forest value chains and stimulate private sector investment, or the FLEGT programme for the Asia region managed by the DG-ENV.
- REDD+ action programmes, which support the strengthening of land governance in third countries (monitoring and control of uses to maintain forest cover).
- In order to avoid duplication and waste of resources, coordination will also be ensured at national level through an information exchange mechanism involving all actors involved in FLEGT processes and enhanced dialogue with the FLEGT Expert Group and the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR).

1.2 GENERAL AND SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES OF THE EU VPA FLEGT PROGRAMME

The overall objective of the programme is to contribute to sustainable forest management. The specific objective is to improve forest governance and law enforcement in VPA countries in order to end illegal logging there. This program has three main components:

- Component 1: institutional support covering the actions necessary for the legal and fair supply of wood, while ensuring its traceability
- Component 2: support stakeholders, in particular NGOs, communities and the private sector, to strengthen their capacity to contribute to VPA implementation in their countries
- Component 3: Programme management (technical coordination, financial and administrative management, monitoring/evaluation)
- Component 4¹: technical support provided by the FAO-led FLEGT Africa and Latin America (FLEGT-ALA) mechanism.

The EU FLEGT VPA programme (2021-2025) aims to develop components 1 and 2 based on the following elements:

Component 1/C1: Institutional support	Component 2 /C2: Support to stakeholders (NGOs, communities and the private sector)
--	--

¹This element was added to the multi-party contribution agreement in May 2024 through Amendment No. 1. It has been operational since October 2024.

Content: • The latest JMRC findings and work plans • An analysis of the VPA implementation framework • An analysis of financing gaps • Financial and technical assistance needs identified by the partner country and EU delegation	Content: • Strengthen the capacity and involvement of stakeholders so that they contribute effectively to VPA implementation processes. • The targeted beneficiaries are: CSOs, the private sector and communities. • Demand-driven grant mechanism aligned with the objectives defined in each country's VPA implementation framework.
Main possible activities: • Support the development and deployment of VPA compliant timber legality assurance systems (LARAs). • Capacity-building of forest administrative officers. • Contribution to national normative and legal reform in accordance with VPA requirements. • Strengthening of transparency, monitoring and control mechanisms. • Strengthening of complaint/claim mechanisms required by VPAs. • Coordination with other forest governance initiatives at the national level.	Main possible activities: • Continued support for independent forest monitoring. • Strengthening compliance of SMEs and micro-enterprises with TLAS. • Improved access of SMEs and micro-enterprises to capital, legal supply chains and markets. • Support the participation of women and youth in VPA-compliant forest management and small wood processing enterprises.

The programme is currently active in five countries: Ghana, Republic of Congo, Liberia, Honduras and Guyana.

In each of these countries, the recipients of funding under this program will be:

- on the one hand, government institutions (component 1) for implementing actions aimed at making VPAs operational: support for the national timber legality assurance system (LAS), adaptation of national legislation, transparency and monitoring and control mechanisms in the forestry sector, etc.
- on the other hand, civil society organizations, communities and the private sector (component 2), in particular marginalized groups (indigenous peoples, women) and small businesses, to strengthen their capacity to contribute effectively to the VPA implementation process and ensure that this process does not exclude them from legality.

1.3 GOVERNANCE AND CONTRACTING AUTHORITY

The AFD is the contracting authority for this program and leads a steering committee that includes representatives of the European Commission (DG INTPA and DG ENV), the management unit (technical operator and administrative and financial operator) and the European Forest Institute as an observer.

The AFD relies on the two operators of the management unit of the EU FLEGT VPA programme (UGP) to support the contracting authority:

- Eticwood/Nature+ (technical operator) responsible for the technical monitoring and implementation of activities in the countries included in the programme (establishment of terms of reference for activities and monitoring of deliverables);
- e-Sud development (administrative and financial operator) responsible for administrative and financial management (procurement process, financial monitoring, invoices, etc.).

2 CONTEXT OF THE FLEGT VPA IN HONDURAS

About 5.4 million hectares of Honduras are covered by forests, which represents 47.7% of the country's surface area. Since 2015, Honduras has lost about 12.5% of its forest area. Anthropogenic causes such as deforestation and illegal logging account for 0.5% (24,000 ha per year), while losses due to the impact of climate change account for 12%, of which 11% (600,000 ha) are due to pest infestations and 1% (56,000 ha per year) to forest fires.

The main types of forest land tenure are: private (35%), indigenous (3%), state (27%), municipal (4%), community (10%) and the rest (21%) have not been assessed to determine their land tenure. In total, about 441 forest management plans, or 304,000 ha (5%) of forests, representing only 2% of the national target, are being implemented. However, nearly 80% of the forest area is subject to human activities, with the intrusion, among others, of illegal loggers, drug traffickers laundering their money and immigrants such as poor families seeking to improve their livelihoods by engaging in agroforestry and pastoralism. The forests of Honduras are thus threatened by unsustainable activities. The biological corridor of Central America, which is part of these forests and plays an essential role in maintaining the biological richness of this region, is threatened.

The forestry sector has accounted for an average of 3.6 per cent of GDP over the past 16 years. Since 2010, the value of wood products imports has increased by only 6% (from €45 million to €48 million), while exports have grown by 62% (from €44 million to €71 million). The value of exports to Europe increased from €1.5 million to €3.5 million in 2016, which represents only 4.9% of exports. The US remains the largest trading partner, with exports rising from €20 million to €27 million (35%) in 2016. However, exports have increased significantly to neighbouring countries, with El Salvador and Nicaragua accounting for €20 million (28%), making them the second largest trading partners of Honduran wood products.

In 2010, *Honduras developed a strategy to combat illegal logging* (Flystop Nacional contra la Tala Elephant). The implementation of this strategy was one of the main reasons why Honduras started

VPA negotiations in January 2013. Honduras thus became the first country in Latin America to start VPA negotiations with the EU.

In June 2018, the parties, represented by the Minister-Director of Forests of Honduras and the General Director of DEVCO, initialled the VPA in Tegucigalpa, in the presence of the President of Honduras and the EU Ambassador to Honduras. The agreement was ratified by both parties in 2021 and will soon enter into force, after which the implementation phase will officially begin.

The first meeting of the pre-joint implementation committee was held on 15 June 2018. During this meeting, the EU and the Honduran government agreed on the need to develop a multi-annual implementation plan, including specific annual operational plans, for the VPA. These plans were developed during the second half of 2018. In March 2019, at the second meeting of the pre-joint implementation committee, the parties agreed on the first draft of the multi-year implementation plan. In 2020, Honduras updated this document and produced a second draft of the multi-year implementation plan that has yet to be discussed and formalized by the parties.

Coordination of the implementation of specific annual operational plans is the responsibility of the Administrative and Technical Secretariat of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (SETAVA), a unit created for this purpose by the Honduran Forestry Institute (ICF) and hosted by it. Given its central role in the implementation of the agreement, SETAVA should have sufficient resources and capacity to carry out its functions. Ensuring sufficient capacity within SETAVA is therefore also included in the multi-annual implementation plan (first specific objective, first strategic area).

The VPA Parties, Honduras and the EU, are supported by the Africa and Latin America VPA Facility (ALA Facility), hosted by the European Forest Institute (EFI) and funded by the EU, for the implementation of the VPA and the continuation of the process.

3 SERVICE DESCRIPTION

3.1 CONTEXT: BLANK TESTS IN APV PROCESSES

Dummy tests, also known as compliance simulations, are a structured methodology for applying VPA legality matrices to a representative sample of forestry companies before the TLAS is fully operational. They consist of auditing companies in relation to all the legality indicators defined in the annexes of the VPA, covering areas such as: the legal existence of the company, land tenure and access rights, forest management authorizations and exploitation, the traceability of wood, transport documents, tax obligations, compliance with labor law and environmental requirements.

Each indicator is evaluated against its defined means of verification and noted, generally as compliant, partially compliant, non-compliant or not applicable, through a combination of documentary audits, field visits and structured interviews with company staff and relevant officials.

The blank tests have a triple objective. First, they provide a diagnosis of the sector's actual compliance level, identifying areas where companies are failing to meet VPA requirements and the reasons for this non-compliance, whether it is gaps in company practices, unenforceable or unclear regulatory provisions, dysfunctional administrative procedures or weak institutional capacity to verify legality. Then, they serve as a stress test for the legality matrices and the TLAS procedures themselves, by revealing verifiers that are not practical, documents that do not exist in the national system or verification chains that cannot be realistically implemented on the ground. Thirdly, they constitute a tool for institutional renewal and strategic communication, making it possible to produce concrete results, which are verifiable and communicable among national stakeholders, FLEGT VPA governance bodies, the Delegation of the European Union and the relevant EU services, in order to contribute to the relaunch of the APV-FLEGT process in Honduras. The experience of other VPA countries has consistently shown that legality matrices, however carefully negotiated, must be validated on the ground before they can be reliably implemented.

Performing blank tests is technically and operationally demanding. Several challenges generally arise:

- Business access and cooperation: Businesses may be reluctant to participate, especially where non-compliance is widespread or there is distrust of government or donor processes. Building trust and ensuring confidentiality of individual results is essential to ensure meaningful participation.
- Complexity and scope of legality matrices: VPA legality matrices generally cover dozens of indicators in several legal areas (forestry, tax, labour, environmental law), which requires multidisciplinary audit teams and careful coordination between document verification and field verification.
- Inapplicable or non-existent verifiers: some indicators may refer to documents or procedures that do not exist in practice, or that the competent authorities are not yet able to issue or verify. Distinguishing between corporate non-compliance and systemic gaps in the legal or administrative framework is essential to the analysis.

- Institutional capacity of verification bodies: The capacity of ICF regional offices and other competent authorities (MiAmbiente, SEFIN, STSS) to verify legality on the ground is in itself a key variable, and often a limiting factor, in the implementation of TLAS.
- Representativeness of the sample: the Honduran private forestry sector is very heterogeneous. It is essential to ensure that the sample covers the diversity of types of operators, types of forests, geographical regions and market orientations (export or domestic) for results to be meaningful at sector level.
- Timing: Dry runs are most effective when they are done at the right time in the VPA process, i.e. when the legality matrices are largely finalized but there is room for adjustment. Carrying them out too early may lead to a waste of effort; carrying them out too late may lock in unworkable procedures.

To date, no systematic practice test of the Honduran private forest sector has been carried out in relation to the VPA legality matrices. This is a significant shortcoming. The experience of other VPA countries has shown that insufficient or late testing of legality matrices is one of the main technical obstacles to implementing TLAS and issuing FLEGT licences, which contributes to significant delays in many VPA processes globally. Honduras, the first country in Latin America to sign a VPA, has an opportunity to learn from these experiences and avoid repeating them.

There are several compelling reasons for the need to carry out blanks in Honduras now:

- The SALH (Sistema de Stick-up of the Hondureño Supply) is at a critical juncture. The TLAS is under development and key design decisions remain pending. Dry runs can directly inform the calibration of legality matrices, design of verification procedures and prioritization of capacity-building needs, while there is still time to make adjustments.
- The governance context is particularly difficult. With human activities affecting 80% of the forest area, only 5% of forests under active management plans and significant pressure from illegal actors, the gap between formal legal requirements and actual industry practices is likely to be considerable. Understanding this gap is a prerequisite for designing realistic and effective compliance support programs.
- The private sector is largely absent from the VPA process. Mock tests offer a structured, non-punitive entry point to engage private forest companies in VPA requirements, raise awareness, identify practical barriers and create conditions for productive dialogue between the sector, ICF and government.
- A national baseline is needed. Without a documented starting point, it will be impossible to measure progress in VPA implementation over time or demonstrate the impact of support programmes to the JIC, the EU delegation and other stakeholders.
- Structured communication of progress is needed. In a context where available resources are limited and VPA processes are regularly monitored for their level of progress, it is essential to demonstrate concrete and measurable progress in order to maintain the attention and commitment of national and European stakeholders. The mock tests will provide concrete elements to feed into the dialogue with the FLEGT VPA governance bodies, the EED, the competent Honduran authorities and the relevant departments of the European Commission.
- The VPA process needs to be reinvigorated. The PPI has not yet been officially adopted by the JIC and there have been repeated delays in implementing the VPA. A well-designed, evidence-based,

practice test can return technical substance and political momentum to the process, strengthening the case for continued EU and AFD support.

So this mission is both timely and strategically necessary. It will establish the first national compliance baseline for the Honduran private forest sector, provide actionable inputs to TLAS design and business support programs, and will contribute to a more structured, evidence-based dialogue between the private sector, ICF, SETAVA and the EU. It will also help to make the progress made more visible and support the relaunch of the FLEGT VPA process in Honduras.

3.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE MISSION

3.2.1 General objective

Assess the compliance of the sector with legality requirements defined in the FLEGT VPA legality matrices, by establishing a sectoral mapping by level of risk and compliance, in order to support future monitoring, institutional dialogue and business assistance programs, as well as the relaunch and visibility of the APV-FLEGT process in Honduras.

3.2.2 Specific objectives

The specific objectives are:

- Audit a representative sample of different profiles of private forest sector companies by level of compliance and risk, based on an analysis grid/operational verification tool based on the FLEGT VPA legality grids.
- Identify practical gaps in VPA FLEGT readiness and operational challenges faced by companies, to guide training and technical assistance.
- Accompany and advise companies on the corrective measures necessary to achieve full compliance with legality grids. In this context, prepare individualized reports, by company or concession, presenting in a structured way the points of conformity and non-compliance with regard to the indicators of legality grids.
- Characterize the technical, human and financial resources of the local ICF branches.
- Establish a national reference level characterising the different types of enterprises, in order to identify support for the various actors and to be used as a tool to measure progress made in implementing the VPA over time.
- Establish a national reference level of the capacities of the local ICF antennas to carry out legality checks on operators.
- Identify the points to be modified from the SALH legality and verification procedures grids in light of the realities on the ground.
- Ensure structured communication around the mock tests, before, during and after its implementation, in order to raise awareness among stakeholders and the target audience about the objectives of the FLEGT VPA, and to highlight the progress made, to feed into the institutional dialogue and support the relaunch of the APV-FLEGT process in Honduras.

3.3 MAIN TASKS EXPECTED FROM THE SERVICE PROVIDER

The AFD is seeking a service provider to carry out the blank test of the Legality Verification System (LVS) in Honduras, over a period of 9 months.

The mock test will involve the competent administrations involved in the legality verification process (SETAVA, ICF, MiAmbiente), as well as a representative sample of companies from the forestry sector. This will be a simulation exercise, not an official control, conducted in a confidential setting and without legal proceedings for the participants.

Furthermore, the consultant's mandate is strictly limited to simulating the legality verification process as part of the mock test. In this regard, it is important to specify that the control or audit of the physical wood traceability system, such as TLAS or any equivalent system, as well as the evaluation or review of other components of the SVL not directly related to the verification of the legality of the selected companies, do not fall within the scope of the mission. Finally, the mission does not result in any certification or labelling of the operators who took part in the exercise.

3.3.1 Implementation of the methodology and coordination of stakeholders

1) Audit protocol and validation grids

The provider will develop and finalize the methodology framework for the dry-run test, including:

- The audit protocol detailing the documentary and field verification steps based on existing control procedures in Honduras
- The sampling criteria for selecting companies to audit (see 1.1.2 below).
- Scoring grids aligned with the legality matrices of the FLEGT VPA for Honduras, allowing standardized evaluation by indicator and by company.
- Operational checklists listing the information, activities and data sources necessary for conformity assessment, constituting an operational translation of legality grids and adapted to field conditions, as well as the list of indicators to assess the resources and control capacities of the local ICF antennas.
- A work plan that plans the control missions to all the forestry companies subject to the dummy test, with individualized verification programs for each company in the sample.
- The service provider will design and deploy a structured system for collecting and managing digital data for the results of the mock test, allowing systematic recording by company and by indicator, with an export feature for reports and future tracking cycles. The deployment will be based on standard digital field data collection tools that do not require specific IT development.

2) Definition of the sample of companies

The contractor will define a representative sample of private forestry companies with active concessions, to be submitted for the blank test. The sample will cover:

- The entire spectrum of operators: large industrial operators, SMEs and artisanal operators.

- Different geographical areas: northern (Olancho, Yoro, Atlántida) and central/western departments (Santa Bárbara, Comayagua, Francisco Morazán).
- Different segments of the value chain: harvesting, processing (sawmills), transport and trade.

The sample size and composition will be validated with SETAVA and ICF.

3) Institutional validation of the methodology

The provider will organize a formal validation process of the methodology with the relevant administrations, notably SETAVA and ICF, in order to:

- Align the dry-run approach with existing verification procedures and institutional mandates of each administration.
- Validate the size and composition of the selected sample of companies.
- Ensure consistency between the legality grids used in the blank test and the official control tools in force.
- Identify and remove any institutional or legal obstacles to the conduct of the blank test.

4) Launch workshop

The contractor will organize a launch workshop bringing together the main stakeholders of the process, competent administrations (SETAVA, ICF, MiAmbiente) and private operators, in order to:

- Officially present the mission, its objectives and the methodology adopted.
- Identify and mobilize voluntary operators to participate in the blanking test.
- Ensure a common understanding of the objectives, process and expected results of the dry run.
- Formally guarantee the confidential and non-punitive nature of the exercise: no legal action may be taken against participants on the basis of the results of the blank test.
- Present the work plan and projected schedule for field missions.

3.3.2 Document audits

1) Compliance Verification by Indicator

The service provider will carry out systematic documentary audits on all companies in the selected sample, verifying compliance with each of the indicators of the legality matrices of the FLEGT VPA for Honduras. These audits will cover in particular:

- The legal existence of the company (statutes, registration, licenses).
- Land rights and access to forest resources (active concession titles).
- Approved forest management plans and annual logging plans.
- Valid operating permissions.
- Fiscal and budgetary obligations (payment of royalties, forestry taxes).
- Compliance with labour law (contracts, security conditions, social insurance).
- Environmental obligations (impact studies, mitigation measures).
- The traceability of wood and transport documents (knives de transport, volume registers).

2) Documentation of gaps

For each audited company, the contractor will document rigorously:

- All the documentary sources consulted and the terms of access.

- Gaps in available documentation: missing, incomplete or inaccessible documents.
- Cases in which the required documents do not exist, are inaccessible or have not yet been defined in Honduran regulations; these cases constitute indicators that cannot be verified at this stage.

3.3.3 Field visits and on-site verification

1) Arrangements for field visits

The contractor will carry out field visits to the operating sites, sawmills and processing facilities of the sampled companies. These visits will be conducted jointly with the ICF agents, according to the approach adopted during the mock tests carried out in Congo, in order to:

- Physically verify the non-documentary compliance elements: operating practices, demarcation of concession areas, worker safety conditions and environmental protection measures.
- Characterize the operational capacities and available resources of ICF agents for field legality verification, identifying bottlenecks in administrative procedures and verification mechanisms, as well as their material and technical needs for future capacity-building actions.
- To collect the views of private operators on obstacles and difficulties encountered in the compliance process, as well as their willingness to participate in capacity-building programmes.

2) Summary verification of traceability

Within the defined scope (see scoping note above), the service provider will carry out a summary verification of the traceability applied in the production chain, from the forest to the point of sale, in order to:

- Identify gaps between regulatory requirements for traceability and the reality observed in the field.
- Assess the extent to which existing traceability systems are effective in verifying the legality of wood origin.
- Make targeted observations on the points of break in the chain of traceability, without auditing the SALH as a whole.

3.3.4 Data analysis, compliance mapping and risk classification

1) Compliance mapping and baseline status

The service provider will compile and analyze all audit results, documentary data, field data, and maintenance data to produce a compliance and risk map by type of actor and across the Honduran private forestry sector. This mapping will also incorporate the results of the evaluation of the local ICF antennas. The objective is to provide SETAVA and ICF with a baseline of the current situation, organized by type of enterprise and legality indicator.

2) Individualized reports by company

While respecting the confidentiality of the blank test, the service provider will classify companies by level of compliance and will prepare an individualized report per company and/or concession, presenting in a structured manner:

- The points of compliance and non-compliance with regard to each indicator in the legality grids.
- Corrective actions necessary to achieve full compliance, prioritized

3) Typological analysis of non-conformities

The service provider will analyze and differentiate the non-conformities identified according to their nature:

- Structural non-conformities: regulatory gaps or administrative shortcomings (absence of implementing texts, undefined procedures, institutional failures).
- Operational non-conformities: deficiencies related to the companies' own capacity (human resources, internal systems, management practices).
- Governance risks: areas of opacity, conflicts of interest or practices that could compromise the integrity of the verification process.

Finally, the provider will identify the indicators of the legality matrix that are currently not verifiable in Honduras due to the lack of regulations, administrative procedures or accessible documentation, and will make targeted and operational recommendations for their progressive implementation.

3.3.5 Validation of legality matrices and SALH verification procedures

1) Revision of the legality matrices

Based on the conclusions drawn from the documentary audits and field visits, the service provider will identify which indicators in the legality matrices of the FLEGT VPA of Honduras need to be revised, clarified or simplified to better reflect the operational realities of the sector. This approach will be directly inspired by the matrix revision process conducted in the Republic of Congo following its dry-run exercises, which constitutes the methodological reference for this task.

2) Recommendations for improving the SALH

The contractor will provide concrete, evidence-based recommendations for improving the verification procedures of the Sistema de Réclamations de la Hondureño (SALH), covering:

- The frequency and depth of checks according to the risk profile of operators.
- The documentary requirements to be standardized or simplified.

The protocols for inter-institutional coordination between ICF, SETAVA, MiAmbiente and other competent authorities. The conclusions and recommendations will be presented to SETAVA and ICF for formal validation, as part of a dedicated workshop, before integration into the final deliverables of the mission.

3.3.6 Institutional dialogue and private sector engagement

1) Structured dialogue sessions

The contractor will lead two structured dialogue sessions bringing together the private forest sector, SETAVA and ICF to:

- Share the aggregate dry-run test results in a manner that respects individual data confidentiality.
- Discuss collectively the compliance gaps and barriers identified
- Identify capacity building needs, both for private companies and ICF services, and future support under the FLEGT VPA programme.

2) Contribution to SIIAVA and identification of support priorities

The contractor will support the implementation of SIIAVA (Secretaría Interinstitucional para la Atención de Gencias del AVA FLEGT) by providing technical inputs from the dry-run test results relevant for inter-institutional coordination, in particular on the points of friction between administrations in the legality verification process.

In collaboration with ICF and SETAVA, the contractor will identify priority areas for targeted technical assistance and training programmes aimed at private enterprises and ICF inspection services. These priorities, based on the analysis of compliance gaps, will be used to guide future EU support programmes as part of its support for the FLEGT VPA in Honduras.

3.3.7. Strategic communication, visibility and valorisation of the FLEGT AVA process

1) Initiation, follow-up and closure communication

The service provider will implement communication actions at the launch, during the execution and at the end of the blanks tests, in order to make the mission known, to inform on its progress and to promote its results.

These actions will aim in particular to explain in an educational way the objectives of the FLEGT VPA and to demonstrate the concrete contribution of blank tests to the verification of timber legality in Honduras.

(2) Targeted institutional communication

The contractor will prepare presentation and information materials tailored to key institutional stakeholders, including:

- Delegation of the European Union to Honduras and DG INTPA F2;
- ICF and SETAVA;
- Official FLEGT VPA partners (private sector, civil society, PIAH);
- Governance bodies of the FLEGT VPA;
- Technical and financial partners concerned.

(3) Digital communication and outreach

The service provider will ensure regular distribution of digital content adapted to the relevant channels, aimed at:

- to raise awareness among the target audience about the issues surrounding the legality of timber;
- illustrate the activities carried out;
- to strengthen the visibility of the FLEGT VPA process;
- to value the progress made.

(4) Final capitalization

At the end of the assignment, the service provider will prepare anonymised and publicly available summary materials, presenting in a clear and visual manner the main lessons learned from the exercise, the progress observed and the prospects for continuing the process under the FLEGT VPA.

3.4 DELIVERABLES

The expected deliverables will be submitted to the EU FLEGT VPA Programme Management Unit. They are listed below in chronological order. This section first presents the technical deliverables related to the implementation of the mission (D0 to D4). A specific section will then present the cross-cutting deliverables related to communication, visibility and enhancement of the APV FLEGT process. Each report will cover the progress of the project, the activities carried out, the progress made and the difficulties encountered.

All reports will be in Spanish. They will be systematically preceded by an executive summary written in Spanish and English, with a maximum length of one page per language, presenting in a synthetic way the main information, conclusions and recommendations for the attention of the decision-makers.

Technical deliverables related to the implementation of the mission

- **D0: Initial report (T0 + 1 month)**

Contains the 9-month work plan, the methodological framework for blank tests (sampling criteria, audit protocol, evaluation grids), a first draft of the specific annual operational plan. Submitted within one month of project launch.

- **D1: Progress report 1 (T0 + 3 months)**

Documents the initiation of field dummy tests, initial document audit results, methodological adjustments, stakeholder coordination activities and the workplan for the following quarter.

- **D2: Progress report 2 (T0 + 5 months)**

Covers mid-term field test results, emerging findings on compliance by firm and indicator, results of field visits, institutional capacity assessment and preliminary risk mapping. Includes the workplan for the next quarter.

- **D3: Progress report 3 (T0 + 7 months)**

Presents the consolidated compliance and risk mapping, preliminary recommendations for improving the legality matrix and SALH procedure, summary of structured dialogue sessions with public and private stakeholders, as well as the work plan for the last quarter.

- **D4: Final report (T0 + 9 months)**

Comprehensive final report covering all activities carried out, full mapping of compliance and sector-wide risks by company and indicator, the national baseline for VPA implementation, the validated recommendations for the legality matrix and adjustments of the SALH procedure, as well as a roadmap for targeted business assistance programs. Includes all financial documentation.

Regular meetings on the progress of the project will be held with the programme management unit in order to take stock of the project, the progress made and the difficulties encountered.

Cross-cutting deliverables related to the communication, visibility, and enhancement of the APV FLEGT process

- **D5: Institutional presentations, promotional events, and media relations (T0 + 1 month / T0 + 9 months)**

The contractor will organize two institutional events, in coordination with SETAVA and DUE. For these two events, the service provider will produce clear, visual and professional presentation materials (PowerPoint type). In addition, two press releases will be produced and distributed via: relevant media, social networks (X, Instagram), as well as the DUE and ICF channels.

1- Launch event (T0+1)

Objective: Educational presentation of the dry run tests, the APV FLEGT system in Honduras and their role in the implementation of the process.

Target audience: DUE, DG INTPA F2, ICF, national authorities, technical and financial partners (including FAO and French cooperation), private sector, civil society.

2- Closing event (T0 + 9 months)

Objective: Presentation of the results, lessons learned and perspectives of the mock test.

Target audience: DUE, DG INTPA F2, ICF, national authorities, technical and financial partners (including FAO and French cooperation), private sector, civil society.

- **D6: Digital communication and valuation of activities (from T0 to T0 + 9 months)**

Implementation of regular digital communication, including 2 posts per month on relevant channels, notably X, Instagram, Facebook and other social networks, including those of the DUE and the ICF, accompanied by visuals. The content will aim in particular to 1) explain the FLEGT VPA and its objectives in an educational way for a Honduran audience; 2) highlight the dry-run activities by showing their contribution to the VPA.

The service provider will also produce 3 video sequences of type Real, about 12 seconds long, in vertical format, to be broadcast on social networks (see above) at launch, midway and closing.

- **D7: Final publication anonymized and broadcastable (T0 + 9 months)**

Production of a final synthetic, visual and publicly diffusible document (PDF format), validated by the client, presenting in an anonymized manner:

- the main lessons learned from the blank test
- the trends observed at the sectoral level
- the observations and progress observed
- the main challenges still to be addressed
- the prospects for continuing and strengthening the APV-FLEGT process in Honduras.

The service provider will ensure wide dissemination to the relevant national and international stakeholders.

3.5 INDICATIVE CALENDAR AND DEADLINES

This mission is expected to start in July 2026 and last 9 months.

N° months	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M6	M7	M8	M9
Key deliverables	D0		D1		D2		D3		D4
Continuous communication	D6								
Key events/milestones				D5					D5+D7

4 SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED BY THE CLIENT

The service will be assigned by the client in the form of a flat-rate contract.

The client will provide the address book and necessary presentations so that the contractor has access to as many contacts and information as possible to carry out its mission. The documents available to the client (non-exhaustive list) will be provided to the service provider.

5 COMMUNICATION

The deliverables will be produced under the EU VPA FLEGT programme implemented by the French Development Agency (AFD) and funded by the European Union (EU).

The individual data collected, nominal observations and sensitive information will remain strictly confidential. Any external communication related to the assignment will be based on aggregated, anonymized content previously validated by the program management unit. The deliverables will include a disclaimer stating that *"this publication was carried out with the financial support of the European Union. Its content is the sole responsibility of <author/partner> name and does not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union or the Agence française de développement."*

For any external communication under the EU VPA FLEGT programme, the service provider shall submit documents to the programme management unit one week in advance to obtain approval of the communication.

The service provider will use the templates provided for reporting, which may be modified as agreed, and mention the program and/or use the program logo on all deliverables and external communications regarding the program.

6 INDICATION OF KEY POSITIONS AND EXPECTED PROFILES

The service provider will present in its offer its methodology and the composition of its team.

Applications must meet the following criteria:

- Experience of collaboration with the government of Honduras and Honduran public institutions (ICF, SETAVA, MiAmbiente) will be appreciated.
- Active network among stakeholders in the Honduran forest sector: public institutions, private sector and civil society.
- Ability to quickly mobilize an operational field team.
- Ability to build a multidisciplinary team covering forest management, field audit and institutional coordination.
- Working language: Spanish. Proficiency in French or English is an asset.

- Experience with the EU FLEGT VPA process in Honduras or a comparable country is a major asset.

For information purposes, the service provider is invited to propose a team with the appropriate skills, which may include:

6.1. Expert 1 - Coordinator

Estimated contribution: 50 working days

Role: Overall coordination of the mission, methodological management of the dry-run test, institutional dialogue with stakeholders (ICF, SETAVA, MiAmbiente, SEFIN, STSS), supervision of the field team, drafting of final deliverables.

- University degree in forest science, natural resource management or equivalent.
- At least 15 years of experience in forest policy, natural resource management and/or FLEGT VPA processes.
- Confirmed experience in conducting mock tests or forest legality audit exercises (experience in Central Africa or Latin America appreciated).
- Knowledge of the Honduran legal framework for the forest sector and key institutional actors.
- Strong team management, leadership and multi-stakeholder process management skills.
- Comprehensive understanding of the VPA process in Honduras.
- Proficiency in Spanish (oral and written) essential. Fluency in French or English is an asset.

6.2. Expert 2 - National Forest Engineer

Estimated contribution: 75 working days

Role: Technical support to the head of mission, documentary audit of forestry companies, analysis of legality matrices, interface with ICF regional offices and audited companies, contribution to deliverables. University degree in forestry, agronomy or environmental sciences.

- At least 10 years of experience in the Honduran forestry sector.
- In-depth knowledge of the Honduran legal framework for forestry, including the 2007 forest law and its implementing regulations.
- Knowledge of the institutional context (ICF, SETAVA, MiAmbiente) and private sector actors.
- Experience in conducting forest audits or inspections.
- Excellent command of written and spoken Spanish.

6.3. Expert 3 - Field Team Leader – Northern Zone (Olancho, Yoro, Atlántida)

Estimated contribution: 75 working days

Role: Conduct of field visits in the northern forest departments, on-site verification of the legality of operations (logging, sawmills, transport), structured interviews with companies and regional ICF offices, collection and documentation of field data.

- University degree in forestry, agronomy or environmental science, or equivalent experience.
- At least 7 years of field experience in the Honduran forestry sector, with direct knowledge of operations in the northern departments.
- Working knowledge of ICF regional office procedures and forest permit systems.
- Experience in conducting audits or field inspections in forestry or natural resources.
- Knowledge of wood traceability requirements and on-site verification methods.
- Ability to work independently in remote field conditions.
- Fluent in Spanish essential.

6.4. Expert 4 - Field Audit Team Leader - Central/Western Zone (Santa Bárbara, Comayagua, Francisco Morazán)

Estimated contribution: 75 working days

Role: Conduct of field visits in the central and western forestry departments, on-site verification, structured interviews with companies and ICF regional offices, collection and documentation of field data.

- University degree in forestry, agronomy or environmental science, or equivalent experience.
- At least 7 years of field experience in the Honduran forestry sector, with direct knowledge of the central and western departments.
- Working knowledge of ICF regional office procedures and forest permit systems.
- Experience in conducting audits or field inspections in forestry or natural resources.
- Knowledge of wood traceability requirements and on-site verification methods.
- Ability to work independently in remote field conditions.
- Spanish as a native language.

6.5. Expert 5 – Local communication and visibility manager

Estimated contribution: 15 business days

Role: Implementation of communication and visibility actions planned by the mission, including organization of institutional events, preparation of presentation materials, digital distribution, press releases, and editing of the final document that can be distributed.

- Training in communication, journalism, digital marketing or equivalent.
- Professional experience in institutional communication or development projects.
- Good command of social media, simple visual tools and layout.
- Excellent command of Spanish.
- Good knowledge of the Honduran media context is an asset.
- A local profile based in Honduras, or with strong operational knowledge of the country, is strongly desired.

7 ESTIMATED BUDGET

The maximum amount of this service is €110k, all fees and taxes included.

The contractor must be autonomous in all its activities (transport, meetings, workshops, observation missions, visibility, etc.), both operationally and financially