

How to communicate

The first FLEGT-licensed timber started to arrive in the European Union (EU) market at the end of 2016. The European Commission, Competent Authorities in EU Member States, timber importers and traders, producers, retailers and many others will need to provide information about FLEGT licences, FLEGT-licensed timber and FLEGT-licensed timber products. These guidelines provide definitions, terms of use, and advice for branding and communicating accurate, coherent information about FLEGT licences.

Definitions

FLEGT

FLEGT stands for Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade. The EU FLEGT Action Plan of 2003 is the EU response to the international challenge of illegal logging.

FLEGT licensing scheme

A FLEGT licensing scheme is the process a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) country follows to issue FLEGT licences to shipments of verified legal timber or timber products destined for export to the European Union, and the recognition of FLEGT licences through border controls by Competent Authorities in EU Member States.

FLEGT licence

A FLEGT licence is a document issued by a Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) partner country for timber or timber products destined for the EU market. The FLEGT licence confirms that the timber or timber products covered by that licence are legal according to relevant laws of the VPA partner country. Timber or timber products accompanied by a FLEGT licence are accepted as legal under the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). Importers therefore do not need to apply further EUTR due diligence procedures to FLEGT-licensed timber or timber products.

Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA)

A Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) is a legally binding bilateral trade agreement between the EU and a timber-exporting country outside the EU. Each VPA aims to ensure that timber and timber products imported into the EU from a partner country comply with the relevant laws of that country.

Legally produced timber

Legally produced timber or timber products have been harvested, imported, processed and traded according to the laws of the countries where the activities have taken place.

More information

- For a complete list of terms and definitions, refer to the [FLEGT Regulation of 2005 and its implementing regulation of 2008](#), the [EU Timber Regulation of 2010](#), and its [delegated and implementing regulations of 2012](#).

Terms of use

Communication about the FLEGT licence and FLEGT-licensed timber should comply with the following terms of use.

Branding

Users of the FLEGT licence throughout the supply chain, and other stakeholders communicating about issues related to FLEGT-licensed timber, should refer to the licence using only words. They should not create a trademark, logo or other visual images to represent or brand the FLEGT licence. The FLEGT licence does not have a visual identity, logo or trade mark.

Non-competitive

All FLEGT licences are equally legal, irrespective of the country of origin. The FLEGT licence is non-competitive. It describes a specific characteristic of timber or timber products, but does not 'brand' them. The FLEGT licence does not compete with brands of forest management methods, timber products or third-party certification schemes, or with the brands of national timber legality assurance systems, such as the Indonesian Sistem Verifikasi Legalitas Kayu (SVLK).

The FLEGT licence indicates only that a timber product is verified as legal by the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) country that has issued the licence. While all VPA countries and producers may compete on the quality, design, species and price of their products, they cannot compete on the quality of their FLEGT licences. All FLEGT-licensed timber is considered legal; one VPA country does not produce 'more legal' or 'better legal' FLEGT-licensed timber than another VPA country.

Acknowledgement on products

Acknowledgement that a product uses FLEGT-licensed timber should be phrased as follows:

"This product is made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country]."

This acknowledgement can be used alongside branding that refers to national timber legality assurance systems, companies, and schemes assuring good forest management practices, sustainability, health and other characteristics of timber products.

Acknowledgement in promotional materials

Users of FLEGT-licensed timber can communicate about FLEGT-licensed timber in their promotional materials in the following way:

"Our products are made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country/ies]. The legality of the timber in our products is assured through [VPA country name(s)]'s national timber legality assurance system and FLEGT licensing scheme. FLEGT-licensed timber is considered to fully comply with the EU Timber Regulation. Customers who place our FLEGT-licensed timber products on the EU market do not have to undertake further due diligence."

Validity of FLEGT licences in markets outside the European Union

FLEGT licences only apply to timber products that Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) countries export to the EU if the products are included in the scope of the VPA. Timber products that have been verified as legal under the same system used for EU exports by a VPA country, but are exported to markets other than the EU do not obtain a FLEGT licence. Information about products exported to non-EU markets should not imply that products are FLEGT-licensed or use the acknowledgements above.

To describe such products, you can however refer to the VPA country's national timber legality assurance system. In some markets, this supports operators in their due diligence or due care obligations.

One example is the following: **"The legality of the timber in our products is assured through [VPA country name(s)]'s national timber legality assurance system which is backed by the EU FLEGT licensing scheme."**

Note however that this only applies to VPA countries that have included exports to all markets in their timber legality assurance system and only to products covered by the VPA.

Company, product and service names

Do not incorporate the words 'FLEGT', 'FLEGT licence', 'FLEGT-licensed timber' or similar words in product names, service names, trademarks, logos or company names.

How do I describe FLEGT-licensed timber products?

Incorrect use

- This chair is FLEGT-licensed.
- This table is from [name of VPA country] and uses FLEGT-licensed timber.
- Our products are made of FLEGT-licensed timber.
- The legality of the timber in our products is assured through a timber legality assurance system.

Correct use

- This product is made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country].**
- This product is made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country].**
- Our products are made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country/ies].**
- The legality of the timber in our products is assured through [VPA country name(s)]'s national timber legality assurance system and the EU-backed FLEGT licensing scheme.**

Guidelines for branding and providing information about FLEGT licences

For producers, processors, traders and their representatives operating in the European Union and in Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) countries, such as:

- Timber trade associations in VPA countries
- Timber traders in VPA countries
- Timber producers and processors in VPA countries
- Timber trade associations in the EU
- Operators and traders in the EU market

Question	Answer
Can I claim that my timber products are FLEGT-licensed?	Timber and timber products can only be FLEGT-licensed if they come from a VPA country that has an operational FLEGT licensing system, are listed in the VPAs product scope and are exported to the EU. You can indicate that such products are FLEGT-licensed in the following way: This product is made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country].
My company sells products that have a FLEGT licence. How can I inform my customers about this? Is there a logo that I can put on my product?	The FLEGT licence does not have a logo. However, you can include the following statement about your product: This product is made of FLEGT-licensed timber from [name of VPA country].
My competitor uses a FLEGT licence logo. I thought there wasn't one? Where can I report this?	If you are in a VPA country, you can report this to the relevant authority described in the VPA. If you are in the EU, you can report it to the authority responsible for FLEGT in your country.
I represent a trade association in a VPA country. I want to explain the benefits of buying FLEGT-licensed timber from my country. How can I do this?	You can explain to customers that timber products from your country accompanied by a valid FLEGT licence are guaranteed to be legal and that they automatically are considered compliant with the requirements of the EU Timber Regulation. You can find language to explain the FLEGT licence to your customers here .
I represent a trade association in the EU. My members are considering importing FLEGT-licensed timber from VPA countries. How can they explain the advantage of FLEGT-licensed timber to their customers?	FLEGT licences are not customer certificates. Once a VPA country begins FLEGT licensing, the EU will only accept FLEGT-licensed imports from that country if the products are listed in the VPA's annex on product scope. Thereafter, there is no consumer certificate or logo. You can explain to your members that a FLEGT licence helps them comply the requirements of the EU Timber Regulation. Operators placing FLEGT-licensed timber and timber products on the EU market do not have to exercise further due diligence. FLEGT-licensed timber and timber products are automatically considered to be legal under the EU Timber Regulation.
I import timber products to the EU from a VPA country that processes timber from a VPA country that issues FLEGT licences. Are the products I import still FLEGT-licensed? What can I tell my customers about the legality of the products I import?	If the 'processing country' is not a VPA country that issues FLEGT licences, then the products you import cannot be FLEGT-licensed. For such products you will need to undertake due diligence as required by the EU Timber Regulation (EUTR). In the due diligence you undertake to comply with the EUTR requirements you can refer to the FLEGT-licensed status of all or some of the raw material used by your product suppliers, and to the integrity of the supply chain controls and legality verification procedures in the VPA country.
I import timber products into the EU from a VPA country that has started FLEGT licensing but my business partner in that country is offering me timber products without a FLEGT licence. What does this mean for my business?	If the products you are offered are included in the product scope of the VPA, the competent authorities in your EU Member State will not permit the products to enter the market. If the products you are offered are outside the product scope of the VPA, they can enter the EU market but you will need to perform due diligence as required by the EU Timber Regulation.
Are there products that cannot be FLEGT-licensed?	Yes. If a VPA country prohibits certain products from export the products fall outside the scope of the VPA and therefore cannot be FLEGT licensed. Indonesia for instance prohibits exports of logs and large dimension sawn timber. Such products are listed in Annex IB of Indonesia's VPA.

For timber producers, processors and traders operating in markets other than the EU or a VPA country

Question	Answer
Can I claim that my timber products are FLEGT-licensed timber products?	FLEGT licences only apply to timber products that Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) countries export to the EU. Timber products that have been verified as legal by a VPA country, but are exported to markets other than the EU do not obtain a FLEGT licence. Information about products exported to non-EU markets should not imply that products are FLEGT-licensed or use the acknowledgements above. To describe such products, you can however refer to the VPA country's national timber legality assurance system. In some markets, this supports operators in their due diligence or due care obligations. One example is the following: "The legality of the timber in our products is assured through [VPA country name(s)]'s national timber legality assurance system which is backed by the EU FLEGT licensing scheme." Note however that this only applies to VPA countries that have included exports to all markets in their timber legality assurance system and only to products covered by the VPA.
If FLEGT-licensed timber is transported to the EU from a VPA country through a third country, such as China, is the integrity of the FLEGT licence affected? In such cases, would the timber legality assurance system in the VPA country offer any guarantee of legality?	If the FLEGT-licensed shipment is only transported through China, and does not become mixed with any other products while it is in China, the integrity of the FLEGT licence is not affected. After a FLEGT-licensed shipment leaves a VPA country, it is the responsibility of the exporter or the EU importer (according to their contract) to ensure the legality of the shipment and thus the integrity of the FLEGT licence until the shipment arrives in the EU.
The products I trade are from a VPA country with an operational timber legality assurance system. However, they do not have a FLEGT licence because they are not exported to the EU. How do I demonstrate that they are legal? Will my customers benefit?	If your timber has been verified as legal by a VPA country using the systems described in the VPA, but does not qualify for a FLEGT licence because it is not exported directly to the EU, you can use the brand of a VPA country's national timber legality assurance system. In some markets this supports operators in their due diligence.

For government officials

- VPA country governments
- European Commission
- EU Member States
- Competent authorities
- Other timber-consuming countries

Question	Answer
I am a government official in a VPA country. I want to explain what my country has done to achieve FLEGT licensing and what this means. How can I do this?	You can say that FLEGT-licensed timber products from your country are guaranteed to be legal, according to the relevant laws of your country. You can find language to explain the FLEGT licence here . You can say that your country has, through a comprehensive multistakeholder process, put in place a robust, independently audited system for tracking timber and verifying its legality throughout the supply chain. You can find language to explain how your country has achieved FLEGT licensing here .
I am a government official responsible for public procurement in a EU Member State. How can I communicate about the benefits of using FLEGT-licensed timber in our procurement?	FLEGT-licensed timber is guaranteed to be legal. Using FLEGT-licensed timber in public procurement ensures that public money is being spent on products made from legally produced timber. The guarantee of legality results from an EU initiative to stop illegal logging, to foster good forest governance and sustainable forest management. You can find language to explain the FLEGT licence here and here .

For civil society

- NGOs in VPA countries
- NGOs in Europe
- International NGOs

Question	Answer
I work for an NGO. I have found a problem with the FLEGT licensing process in a VPA country. I want to tell stakeholders in the EU and in the VPA country about this, so the system can be improved. How can I do this?	You can bring problems to the attention of the relevant authorities following the procedure described in the VPA. In Indonesia, for instance, if you find a problem with one of the licensing authorities you should raise this with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry. If you find a problem with an auditor, you should raise this with the relevant Conformity Assessment Body. If you find a problem with a Conformity Assessment Body you should contact the National Accreditation Body of Indonesia (KAN).

Other actors

- Monitoring organisations in the EU
- Support programmes in VPA countries

Question	Answer
I work for a Monitoring Organisation in the EU. Now that FLEGT-licensed timber is available in the EU, what can I tell my clients?	You can provide your clients with information about the VPA countries that export FLEGT-licensed timber. The products covered by FLEGT licences are listed in each VPA's annex on product scope. You can download ratified VPAs and consult the annexes on product scope here . Answers to other questions your clients may ask may be found in the Frequently asked questions on FLEGT-licensed timber section.