

NOVEMBER 2016

Verification of documentation before issuance of Export Permit

The legal requirements that are met to export logs from Liberia are embedded in the National Forestry Reform Law of 2006 (NFRL/2006), the Ten Core Regulations and the Code of Forest Harvesting Practices. In addition, Standard Operating Procedures developed for the implementation of the Chain of Custody System, which are currently in use, are implemented significantly and improvements are being carried out on the **SOP's** as it relates to the **VPA** implementation.

In order to grant permission for logging activities and export in Liberia, the following requirements need to be met by the concession holder. The requirements from 01 to 03 (as below) are required for all concession holders to start exportation; however, requirements from 04 to 05 are to be followed for issuance of each export permit per shipment continually during the life cycle of the contract:

1. **Prequalification procedures** – requirements to be followed by applicant requesting the allotment of forest concession in line with Public Procurement and Concession Act (PPCA) requirements;
 - a. Pre-qualification certificate
2. **Concession allocation (FMC)** – competitive bidding process determines the awarding of contracts which includes:
 - a) Forest management contract
 - b) Socio-economic survey;
 - c) Forest inventory and environmental survey;
3. **Pre-felling requirements**
 - a) Boundary line demarcation;
 - b) **Social agreement;**
 - c) Environmental and social impact assessment;
 - d) Performance bond;
 - e) Strategic forest management plan (SFMP);
 - f) Five years forest management plan (5YFMP);
 - g) Annual operation plan (AOP);
 - h) Annual coupe demarcation;
 - i) Tax clearance; and payment of Area fee and Annual Administration Fee
4. **Felling requirements**
 - a) Tax clearance; barcode issuance fee, block inspection fee
 - b) Annual harvesting certificate;
 - c) **Barcode Issuance:** After allotment of respective concession to Operator, the operator applies for barcodes to apply on trees (tree barcodes) and logs (log barcodes) to be enumerated, felled, converted to logs and subsequently exported. The barcodes issued are operator specific and cannot be used by other operators in the field. The same barcodes are verified throughout the life cycle of forestry operations in Liberia.
 - d) **Verification of SSF/TDF:** The SSF (Stock Survey Forms) are used to submit enumerated tree data (more than 50 cm diameter at DBH) with the help of Tree barcodes. The

enumerated trees are then submitted (not less than 60 cm and/or as per minimum cutting diameter specified for individual species) for felling approval. Once approved the trees can be harvested and are submitted in the form of TDF (Tree Data Form) for stumpage invoicing.

5. Post-felling requirements

- a) **Stump verification:** Inspection to be conducted for stumps where the trees have been harvested
- b) **LDF:** Trees are then cut into logs and log tags (log barcodes) are applied. The data is recorded with the help of LDF (Log Data Form). Logs are then prepared to be transported to log yards from Forests sites with the help of Waybills.
- c) **Transportation and Waybill checks:** Waybills are issued to concession holders having unique barcode for identification and are checked in the forest concessions while loading, at check points during transportation and also at log yard while unloading by FDA and SGS.
- d) **EPR/LDF submission:** Upon successful inspection of the logs, the same could be submitted for issuance of SPECs, Export Permits and Certificate of Origin. Relevant certification could be issued subjected to verification of LDF against TDF & SSF.
- e) **Log yard verification** – LDF verification is done in the log yard before exportation
- f) **Shipment specification** – SPECs issued to operator clearly indicating compliant exportable logs
- g) **Shipment verification:** Verification of logs at the export port at the time of export
- h) **Certificate of origin:** issued subject to receipt of draft/ original Bill of Lading(BL) and Short Shipped inspection report from the Port
- i) **Verification of Taxes/ Fee Paid:** Verification of fee/ taxes paid such as stumpage, export invoice, way bills etc.

The above requirements are part of the VPA Legality Matrix, but don't cover all the verifiers. In the future VPA **Legality Assurance System (LAS)** will ensure credible mechanism for Chain of Custody and legal traceability of logs being exported from Liberia. The system will be able to answer all the questions raised by any third party with respect to checks being made in the forest sector pertaining to legal traceability. In other words, the VPA requirements will be fulfilled in full. This will also include the compliance with all the principles, indicators and verifiers as per the requirements of Legality Matrix of the VPA.
