Interim Report 2: Strengthening the Capacities of Gabonese Civil Society Members and Local Communities

Rapport intermédiaire 2 : renforcement des capacités des membres de la société civile gabonaise et des communautés locales

This report was prepared for the program related to the implementation of forest regulations, governance, and trade for countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP-FLEGT Support Program - GCP/INT/064/EC) Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. Brainforest NGO located in Ambowé district, P.O. Box: 23 749 Libreville, Email: info@brainforestgabon.org - www.brainforestgabon.org. Gabon From September 26 to November 26, 2012 INTERIM REPORT II FAO PROJECT PHASE II

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Richelieu ZUE OBAME FLEGT/APV Focal Point for Civil Society/Gabon Head of Brainforest's FLEGT/APV program Email: zrichelieu@gmail.com. Tel: +241 07 05 22 10 / +241 06 29 76 58 © November 2012 BRAINFOREST Ambowé district, P.O. Box: 23 749 Libreville – Tel: 07 97 84 25 Email: info@brainforestgabon.org – www.brainforestgabon.org Registration No: 00265/MISPD/SG/CT - NIF: 89616C The content of this publication is the sole responsibility of Brainforest NGO and cannot in any way be considered as reflecting the views of the European Union. This report provides a description of the project's activities, results, and deliverables for the period starting [on September 26, 2012, and ending on November 26, 2012] 2 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance.

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Richelieu ZUE OBAME FLEGT/APV Focal Point for Civil Society/Gabon Head of Brainforest's FLEGT/APV program This report was prepared for the program related to the implementation of forest regulations, governance, and trade for countries in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific (ACP-FLEGT Support Program - GCP/INT/064/EC) Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. Brainforest NGO located in Ambowé district, P.O. Box: 23 749 Libreville, Email: info@brainforestgabon.org - www.brainforestgabon.org Gabon From September 26 to November 26, 2012 FAO PROJECT PHASE II INTERIM REPORT II 3 Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance.

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4 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization FLEGT: Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade OIF: Independent Forest Observation. OSC: Civil Society Organization. SVL: Legality Verification System GPS: Global Positioning System OIF: Independent Forest Observation. OSC: Civil Society Organization

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5 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved

governance. Table of ContentsINTRODUCTION .....

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6 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. In 2011, Gabon's Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), grouped within the platform "Environment Gabon", benefited for the second consecutive time from the support of the ACP-FLEGT program of the FAO. The objective of this support was to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of their members and those of rural communities in the techniques of Independent Forest Observation (OIF). After developing activities aimed at introducing OIF to the project's targets, the implementation plan recommended deploying technical modules to: (i)

introduce civil society actors and those from rural communities to the techniques for preparing OI missions; (ii) train them in the correct identification of violations; (iii) introduce them to the use of tools for collecting data on violations such as: the GPS, digital cameras; (iv) train them in the effective presentation of an OI report. In accordance with Article 4 of the memorandum of understanding, interim report 2 must account for: (i) the training workshop organized on the theme of preparing observation missions and identifying violations; (ii) as well as the 4 practical work sessions on forest sites, which allowed training and familiarizing Gabon's civil society actors and rural populations with the techniques and tools of OIF. To be effective, the report is structured as follows: A - An Analytical Part. It examines the activities that have been carried out and attempts to highlight: a) The Description of activities, results, and achievements of the project; b) The Contribution of the project to the national FLEGT objectives; c) Description of lessons learned; d) Visibility actions; INTRODUCTION

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7 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. e) Unfinished activities and reasons for non-completion; f) Summary of expenses; In annex: B - The training modules and their contents. This will present in detail the content of the training modules and the exchanges that accompanied them. a) The main physical forest violations; b) The Methodology for collecting information; c) Planning and preparation for an OI mission; d) Data collection using GPS; e) Data processing with Mapsource software.

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8 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and collecting information on forest violations to improve governance. I - Description of activities, results, and completed achievements of the project. The activities covered in this interim report include the workshop held in Libreville on September 26 and 27, 2012, and the four (04) practical training sessions held in Mitzic, Meyang, Mouila, and Tchibanga from October 3 to 26, 2012. The purpose of these activities was to strengthen the capacities of CSOs and rural populations to understand and use the techniques and tools of Independent Forest Observation (IFO). The results obtained at the end of the tasks are: (i) a proven capacity of CSOs and rural populations to effectively prepare an IFO mission; (ii) a real ability to identify forest violations in logging areas; (iii) and finally, a skill in presenting coherent observation mission reports. Another result to mention is the expertise now available among rural populations and CSOs to collect cartographic information related to illegal practices on identified sites. This collection is done using the Global Positioning System (GPS), and CSOs and rural populations have been trained in: (i) the use of GPS, (ii) processing the collected data, (iii) and producing reports highlighting the geographic coordinates of places where illegal activities have been noted. In light of the above, it can be confidently stated that the results positively impact the overall objective of the project. They indeed strengthen the operationality of the general objective, namely: Informing, raising awareness, and building the capacities of Gabon's civil society and local communities regarding the concept of Independent Forest Observation. Analytical Part

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9 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and collecting information on forest violations to improve governance. The aim is to encourage these actors to monitor how forestry activities are conducted in Gabon, and it can be said that the process of improving forest governance, through

the project, is thus strengthened. Description of activities and results of the project General objective of the project: To inform, raise awareness, and strengthen the capacities of civil society and local communities on the concept of Independent Forest Observation (IFO). Brief list of results obtained during the period covered by the report that contribute to achieving the general objective of the project: – 1. Holding a training workshop in Libreville on the theme of preparing observation missions and identifying violations. – 2. The execution of the 4 technical training sessions planned in the activity schedule. – The topics developed were: – types of physical violations – methodology for data collection – planning, preparation, and execution of an IFO mission – writing reports – introduction to GPS use, – introduction to the mapping software MapSource. Objective 1 Members of the civil society network and local communities are informed about: the concept of Independent Forest Observation (IFO): history, role, forms. Results contributing to achieving the objective: About twenty CSOs members of the platform and community groups were informed in four (04) forest provinces of Gabon.

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10 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and collecting information on forest violations to improve governance. Description of activities and results of the project Activity 1.1 Organization of 4 information missions to grassroots communities; Measures taken: contact and information of local authorities on the FLEGT process, its implementation requirements, and the importance of good representation of civil society. Results: strong participation (on average 20 in each region) of CSOs and communities during the work. Activity 1.2 Organization in Libreville of one (1) information workshop on the concept of independent forest observation: history, role, forms. Measures taken: contact and information of local authorities on the FLEGT process, its implementation requirements, and the importance of good representation of civil society. Results: 36 organizations attended the work in Libreville. Objective 2 Strengthening the capacities of civil society and local communities to carry out monitoring missions and collect information on forest violations. Results contributing to achieving the objective: 1. Holding a training workshop in Libreville on the theme of preparing observation missions and identifying violations. 2. The execution of the 4 technical training sessions planned in the activity schedule. Activity 2.1 Training workshop on the theme of preparing observation missions and identifying violations. Measures taken: Invitation of representatives of CSOs members of the platform to Libreville from September 26 to 27, 2012, to participate in the work. Results: Strong participation of CSOs in the work and assimilation of the teachings received. Activity 2.2 4 technical training sessions held. Measures taken: Mobilization of partner CSOs from within the country to identify training sites; organization of the descent to the training sites; contact with authorities and start of training. Results: - the types of physical violations are learned and known; - the methodology for data collection is assimilated; - planning, preparation, and execution of an IFO mission are mastered; - writing reports is understood by CSOs; - introduction to GPS use is ensured and understood, - introduction to the mapping software MapSource has been ensured and assimilated.

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11 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and collecting information on forest violations to improve governance. Activity 2.3 4 practical work sessions on forest sites lasting 4 days for 15 people. Measures taken: the practical work sessions were scheduled during the same mission as the training planned in activity 2.2, to rationalize costs and maximize the capacity to appropriate the lessons learned. Results: - the types of physical violations are learned and known; - the

methodology for data collection is assimilated; - planning, preparation, and execution of an IFO mission are mastered; - writing reports is understood by CSOs; - introduction to GPS use is ensured and understood, - introduction to the mapping software MapSource has been ensured and assimilated. I - 1) The Contribution of the project to the national FLEGT objectives. The results obtained during the period described in this report are important for the national FLEGT strategy in several respects. Indeed, the activities that have been developed address cross-cutting issues of capacity building and efficient involvement of stakeholders, particularly civil society, in the national FLEGT strategy. Through this approach, they allow us to think that the project has deliberately chosen to provide the national strategy with actors capable of ensuring its implementation on the ground. Two reasons support this thesis. The first is related to the central objectives of the project: to raise awareness and strengthen the capacities of CSOs and rural populations on the techniques and the concept of Independent Forest Observation (IFO). The second reason, for its part, stems from the logical link that exists between IFO, the Legality Verification System (LVS), and the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA). Indeed, the LVS is the backbone of a VPA. It is the element that guarantees the legality of products placed on the market. It is the dynamic engine of the credibility of a signed VPA. However, what must be understood is that the LVS relies primarily on two instruments: (i) the Traceability mechanism (ii) and the Independent Audit. 1- The wood Traceability mechanism. Practically, involving CSOs in monitoring wood traceability activities is often difficult, as the sectoral administrations involved consider their tasks as falling within the sovereign competencies of the State. Therefore, the grafting insti-

 Capacity building of members of Gabonese civil society and local communities in monitoring and information collection activities on forest violations for improved governance. The institutional framework for CSOs is precarious. Aware of this reality, the project, while continuing its activities, aims to lay the groundwork for efficient support to the Independent Auditor of the system. 2- The Independent Audit. The Independent Auditor indeed needs information contributions from CSOs to confront at least two data sources, to then guarantee to the national and international community the compliance of exported timber shipments with the laws in force in the country. In such a context, the information contributions from civil society must be reliable, rigorous, and obtained through a technical protocol that combines a proven methodology. Building and maturing the information collection strategy of CSOs, through the OIF, has been another significant contribution of the project to the national FLEGT strategy. Also, strengthening the capacities of actors so that they acquire technical skills regarding the OIF is, in a way, adding value to the national FLEGT strategy, but also to the Independent Auditor who will be responsible for monitoring the FLEGT process in Gabon. The beneficiaries of the project are Gabonese CSOs from the FLEGT network and rural communities in the target regions, namely the provinces of Estuaire, Woleu-Ntem in the north of the country, Ngounié in the southeast, and Nyanga in the south. This involves an average of 20 community units and 63 CSOs that are members of the national FLEGT network. Furthermore, it is important to note that the project has helped to create synergies between local authorities and civil society, in order to work together to combat the illegal exploitation of forest resources present in their territories. Indeed, Gabon adopted a law on decentralization in 2012. The entry into force of this law is scheduled for January 2013. This new regulatory framework will further require local authorities to engage in the sustainable management process of the natural resources available in their territories. Having actively participated in technical sessions organized within the country, some local administration officials, during their interventions, expressed the wish that synergies be developed with civil society, in order to achieve an effective control of forest

resources. II - Description of lessons learned The lessons learned from the project, at this stage, have been disseminated on the Brainforest website (www.brainforestgabon.org), in order to share them with a wider audience, beyond all stakeholders in the FLEGT process in Gabon. Specifically, it has been noted that the development of an independent forest observatory with CSOs and rural communities requires prior: – Demystifying the concept, by clearly making the involved actors understand that it is, through the notion of OIF, a set of activities they sometimes practice unconsciously in their daily lives, when they engage in hunting, fishing, or agricultural activities, etc. – Saying that observing consists of: (i) realizing that a tree that often caught their attention, for one reason or another, has been cut down. (ii) Asking who could have done it; (iii) noting that a private operator, neighboring their village lands, is extending its activities into the forest areas that belong to them, etc.; (iv) questioning whether it is normal to open roads everywhere in the forest; (v) burying wood or abandoning logs on sites; (vi) cutting down trees with a small diameter... and initiating a mechanism for collecting objective information on these facts. – Explaining, in very simple words, how to use the tools and techniques specific to an OIF exercise. – Prioritizing practice over theoretical explanations. To do this, accompany explanations with practical exercises in the field. – Always identifying resource persons at the village level who have above-average skills in the community. – Building around the identified resource persons the strategy for disseminating and assimilating OIF techniques at the village level. – Creating a permanent information mechanism, whose essential characteristic is to establish a short but dynamic relay for reporting violations. – Conducting frequent field visits in the forest basins for observation. The project activity reports and the contents of the training modules on OI techniques have been printed and provided to each partner CSO, to allow for a complete assimilation of the lessons learned. The targeted stakeholders for sharing experiences include the administration and the private sector. The reasons for this choice stem first from the fact that the indicated targets, through their representatives, are part of the panel of experts preparing the negotiation work of the APv and the implementation of the agreement. Moreover, it is imperative to share knowledge with other stakeholders, so that everyone is on the same level of understanding. The merit of this approach is to facilitate the understanding of the claims of one stakeholder when it deems its role necessary for the adoption of a FLEGT tool, or when it considers its involvement imperative for proper implementation. III - Visibility actions The visibility of the European Commission, FAO, ACP Secretariat, and the project has been ensured by regular online postings on the Brainforest website (www.brainforestgabon.org) regarding the project. In addition to disseminating information online, communication materials have been produced to facilitate the understanding of the OI to communities and local authorities. These materials, in accordance with visibility guidelines, display the logos of the European Union, the ACP-FLEGT program, and FAO. They also indicate the source of funding that makes the implementation of activities possible. IV - Unfinished activities and reasons for non-completion All activities planned at this stage of the project have been implemented. However, it is objective to say that this full implementation was not possible without the revision of the program that was granted to the action. Also, the new work plan that governed the activities related to this interim report is presented as indicated below. Activities Locations (cities and provinces) Periods in 2012 Training workshops on Independent Forest Observation techniques: i) technical sessions on types of physical irregularities; ii) technical sessions on preparing an OiF mission; iii) training sessions on using GPS for data collection related to illegal logging Oyem (Woleu-Ntem) From September 6 to 12, 2012 Kango (Estuaire) From September 13 to 19, 2012 Mouila (Ngounié) From October 15 to 21, 2012 Tchibanga (Nyanga) From October 22 to 28, 2012 Training workshop in Libreville Libreville From September 26 to 27, 2012 Closing workshop Libreville (Estuaire) December 8, 2012

16 USD FCFA # units Unit cost (FCFA) Total (FCFA) 1. Human resources 1.1 Permanent staff 1.1.1 Project Manager Per month 12 1,000 12,000.00 6,000,000 12 500,000 6,000,000 0 1.1.2 Project Assistant Per month 12 600 7,200.00 3,600,000 12 300,000 3,600,000 0 1.1.3 Financial Officer Per month 12 400 4,800.00 2,400,000 12 200,000 2,400,000 0 1.1.4 Communication Officer Per month 12 400 4,800.00 2,400,000 12 200,000 2,400,000 0 Subtotal Human resources 43,920.00 21,960,000 14,400,000 7,560,000 2. Travel Subtotal Travel (4 information missions) mission 4 32,880.00 16,440,000 10,663,335 5,776,665 3. Equipment 4. Operational costs 4.2 Office rental Per month 12 2,000 6,000.00 3,000,000 12 250,000 3,000,000 0 4.3.1 Daily consumables (paper, ink, pens, etc.) Per month 12 300 3,600.00 1,800,000 10 150,000 1,522,880 277,120 Subtotal Operational costs 9,600.00 4,800,000 4,522,880 277,120 5. Workshops/Training 5.1 Workshop 1: Project Launch (17 Workshop 1 5,620 5,620.00 2,810,000 1 2,735,664 74,336 5.2 Workshop 2: Information on the notion of independent forest observation Workshop 1 9,120 9,120.00 4,560,000 1 4,493,765 66,235 5.3 Training session 1 (MITZIC, 7 days, 15 people Training 1 2,080.00 1,040,000 1 1,050,000 -10,000 5.3 Training session 1 (KANGO, 7 days, 15 people) Training 1 2,080.00 1,040,000 1 1,050,000 -10,000 5.3 Training session 1 (TCHIBANGA, 7 days, 15 people) Training 1 2,080.00 1,040,000 1 1,050,000 -10,000 5.3 Training session 1 (MOUILA, 7 days, 15 people) Training 1 2,080.00 1,040,000 1 4,493,765 -3,453,765 Subtotal Workshops / Training 6. Information management 6.1 Publications 6.1.1 Production of materials Per unit 25 120 3,000.00 1,500,000 470,000 1,030,000 6.1.2 Production of audio documentaries Per unit 7 600 4,200.00 2,100,000 0 0 6.1.3 Website management Per unit 12 300 3,600.00 1,800,000 900,000 900,000 6.2 Visibility actions Per unit 0 Subtotal 10,800.00 5,400,000 1,370,000 4,030,000 TOTAL 135,000.00 67,500,000 38,185,644 29,314,356 Balance (FCFA) Budget Line Unit # Units Unit Cost (in USD) Total Budget (FAO Funding) Expenses/Level of completion during the period June 2011 - July 2012 Summary Budget (Standard Presentation)

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17 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. The appendices provide detailed content of the training modules and the discussions that these contents have generated. They also deliver the reports of missions that took place within the country. I - Appendix 1: The Libreville Workshop. The purpose of the Libreville workshop was to facilitate the understanding of the concept of "forest violation" to the civil society organizations (CSOs) of Gabon's FLEGT platform. This clarification was intended to lead to a better internalization, by the CSOs and rural communities, of all facts related to this concept. The activities of the workshop focused on identifying the different areas of the forestry sector where practices related to forest violations are recurrently observable. appendices

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18 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. I - 1) The main physical violations. Developed by the FLEGT/APV focal point of Gabon's civil society, Richelieu ZuE OBAME, the communication given on this occasion revolved around four points: (i) what is a forest violation; (ii) what are the possible forms of forest violations; (iii) how is a violation observed; (iv) who is authorized to do so. a) Definition of the concept of forest violation. At the beginning of the communication, the FLEGT focal point specified that the material facts referred to by the term "forest violation" are very broad in Gabon's regulatory texts. The Forest Code (Law 16/01), he added, uses this term to qualify all

situations of violation of regulatory provisions. The aim of the presentation is therefore not to propose a formal definition of the concept of forest violation for each specific material fact. It is rather necessary to make the CSOs understand the context in which material facts related to forestry activities could be qualified as violations. Continuing, the speaker added: "The area in which Civil Society Organizations and rural communities are invited to contribute is the monitoring process of forestry activities through the OIF. It is also necessary to circumscribe the perception of forest violations," in order to make the actors effective on the ground. Following these clarifications, the FLEGT focal point suggested that given the context of governance in the country, and also considering the organizational level and general technical maturity of the CSOs in the FLEGT network, the strategic areas to urgently invest in at the moment should be: – Compliance with procedures regarding forest management; – Customary usage rights; – The economic and social provisions of the Forest Law. Indeed, "it is strategic to work on forest violations affecting the aforementioned areas," the FLEGT focal point reiterated. Because these violations are easily "accessible and observable" by the CSOs and communities. By mastering the methodology for monitoring forestry activities at this scale, the

 CSOs could more easily integrate the following layers of the wood sector. On the other hand, by addressing activities related to: (i) monitoring the payment of forestry taxes, (ii) the traceability of shipments, or (iii) the compliance of customs operations for example, without being certain of mastering the technical requirements necessary for these exercises, the risk of discrediting the action of civil society becomes significant. One of the strategies that government authorities regularly use to justify their refusal to involve CSOs in public management is precisely to mention the "deficit" of technical capacities of these actors to effectively address the issues at hand. Thus, the idea of establishing the OIF, while gradually integrating the fields of investigation, seems justified, Richelieu ZuE OBAME concluded at the end of the presentation on this point. Reacting to the focal point's remarks, the leaders of the NGOs in the FLEGT platform "Environment Gabon" spoke up to make the following interventions: The NGO Mouyissi-Environment. Based in the Southeast of Gabon, specifically in the city of Mouila, the leader of this CSO stated that the strategic analysis of the focal point is objective, but it also raises practical concerns for the platform: 1- How much time do we have to train our members on the various issues that have been raised here, knowing that exploitation, and thus illegal practices, continue? For a region experiencing a lot of forestry activities, the question of the time scale is crucial. 2- Where will we find the necessary resources to support these gradual capacity-building programs? The NGO "Dynamique Mitzicoise". Active in the Woleu-Ntem province, in northern Gabon, Mr. Ibrahim Edan from this CSO, reacting in turn, stated that the issue of capacity building on these points raised could be resolved differently, without needing to sequence the training. In his opinion, the real question to ask is how civil society intends to achieve a satisfactory coverage of the different practices of forest violations and provide honorable quality reports to stakeholders and the various donors supporting the activities of CSOs. Continuing, the leader of "Dynamique Mitzicoise" said that two avenues should be explored. The first is the need to convince Local Authorities that CSOs can work with them in a spirit of synergy of actions and efforts, to ensure sustainable management of the natural resources present in their respective territories. The second avenue is to develop joint projects aimed, among other things, at capacity building, and partly supported by these Administrations and traditional donors of civil society. Through this approach, Mr. Edan believes that the coverage of training fields can be simultaneously comprehensive while strengthening the CSO – Local Authorities partnership. The

NGO Environment Without Borders. Mr. Hubert Aimé KOuMBA, head of the said structure, intervened to signal the urgency, in his opinion, of implementing a capacity-building program for the benefit of the platform and rural communities extended to Local Authorities, focused on facilitating access to Laws and "easy explanations" of the contents of these Laws. CSOs, he continued, will only be effective in tracking violations if they first understand the Law and its overall context, as well as the stakes revealed by the application of the Laws. Thanking the various speakers for the depth of their remarks, the focal point reassured the audience by indicating that the technical scheme he described, which requires a gradual mastery of the fields of investigation of illegalities, is not contradictory to the opinions of others. It is simply driven by a strategic attitude, considering the global factors to be integrated into the equation if we want to achieve maximum effectiveness in terms of repressing illegal practices in Gabon's wood sector. Having made this clarification, the focal point then set about presenting to the participants some types of forest violations that are easily observable within the framework of an external OIF mission.

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21 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. b) The most identifiable forest violations. In terms of forest management (Article 276). – exploitation without a management plan or with an unapproved management plan; – non-compliance with the management plan; – non-compliance with production, processing, and export quotas; – opening of boundaries and marking with non-compliant topographic devices; – intensive exploitation harmful to the environment; – non-compliance with cutting latitudes; – cuts below the diameter. In terms of customary usage rights – inobservance of the regulations on usage rights provided for in Article 14; – non-compliance with agricultural sessions; Economic and social provisions Application of the provisions of Article 251. c) Observing forest violations. Addressing the point on observing forest violations, the focal point told civil society actors that violations are observed through a report established according to the modalities defined by regulatory means in Article 264 of the forest code, under penalty of nullity. The reports referred to in Article 264 above are valid until proven false regarding the material facts related to the observed violations (Article 265). The person condemned by default who opposes may contest the report on which the judgment was rendered. (Article 266). Following this presentation, a CSO leader wanted to know more about the preceding content. The NGO Nyanga-Tour. Mr. Jean Nestor PAmA PAmA from the NGO Nyanga-Tour, based in the South of Gabon, spoke up and asked whether the reports of forest violations that CSOs must draft are really required to conform to the model prescribed by Article 264 of the forest code.

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22 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. Continuing his reflection, he expressed doubts about the likelihood that an administrative authority in charge of forests would be able to provide civil society organizations (CSOs) with practical standards for reports. The issue, in his opinion, is not to create conditions of credibility for reports produced by NGOs and rural communities. In response to this intervention, the focal point clarified that the models of reports mentioned here are prescribed by regulatory means to facilitate judicial procedures. However, he added, "the credibility of the CSO reports will depend on your mastery of the technical tools that will be provided during the practical training sessions in the forests." Moreover, while acknowledging the value of the remark made by Mr. PAMA, the focal point emphasized that "it is useful to say

that the observation of forest violations, for judicial purposes, unfortunately falls solely under the administrative competence of the Water and Forest Agents." "In the case of the CSO reports that Gabonese CSOs would like to initiate, it is important to remember that this does not involve engaging in judicial procedures, at least not directly, based on your observation reports. Rather, it is about providing the bodies involved in the implementation process of the VPA with tangible information on illegal practices. In turn, based on the information provided by the CSOs, they can mobilize an investigation procedure for judicial purposes," he concluded on this point. d) Who is authorized to observe forest violations. The FLEGT focal point established a link between the question of who is authorized to observe forest violations and the previous discussion points, following Mr. PAMA's question. Once again, he reminded the audience that in terms of observing forest violations, regulatory texts state that this activity is the exclusive competence of the Water and Forest agents, as they are sworn judicial police officers with specialized competence. Indeed, depending on their rank, agents take an oath before the competent jurisdiction according to the modalities defined by regulatory means (Article 263 of Law 16/01 known as the forestry code). From this perspective, and in the absence of a modification of the texts, it is difficult to obtain that CSOs can observe violations, the focal point will say. In other words, it is hard to think that reports from CSO missions could acquire the status of official reports (Pv) for observing forest violations. Reacting to what they perceived as formal evidence that the government wants to exercise opaque management of the country's forest resources by monopolizing control over forestry operations, some civil society actors wondered if there are means of recourse to compel the government to validate the conclusions of a CSO observation report. In response to this question, the FLEGT focal point stated that civil society is a member of the negotiation committee and then of the implementation of the VPA. From that moment, the constraining force it has lies in its ability to denounce at these levels any proven failure to take into account a demonstrated violation. In addition to being an important stakeholder in the negotiation and implementation committee of the VPA, civil society has the capacity to refer to the Independent Auditor and even the EU, said Richelieu ZUE OBAmE. It should therefore be noted that the mission of CSOs is to observe from the outside how activities unfold and to prepare reports to submit to the competent authorities, private sector partners, the Independent Auditor, and the EU.

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25 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance.

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26 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. Training workshop on Independent Forest Observation techniques Wednesday, September 26 – Thursday, September 27, 2012 Hôtel Hibiscus (Louis District) Libreville

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28 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. Training workshop on Independent Forest Observation techniques Wednesday, September 26 – Thursday, September 27, 2012 Hôtel Hibiscus (Louis District) Libreville

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30 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. II - Annex 2: Practical training sessions within the country. Annex 2 addresses the activities planned in points 2.2 and 2.3 of the memorandum of understanding. These activities are outlined as follows: • 2.2 Organize 4 theoretical training sessions on GPS usage (the theoretical sessions are held over 2 days: 1 in the classroom and 1 practical exercise in the city, and are immediately followed by practical sessions on-site in the forests for 4 days for 15 people); • 2.3 Organize 4 practical sessions on forest sites lasting 4 days for 15 people (these sessions start immediately after the theoretical training). Note: The theoretical and practical sessions have therefore been scheduled during the same missions and were executed one after the other to rationalize costs and maximize the capacity to absorb the lessons learned. The practical sessions took place in regions hosting forest concessions within the country (Woleu-Ntem, Estuaire, Ngounié, Nyanga). The aim of these sessions was to put CSOs and rural participants in a real learning situation regarding OIF techniques on the ground. It was also about giving CSOs the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the technical tools of OIF. To this end, for each tool, a phase of theoretical explanations in the classroom preceded the fieldwork. It should be noted that the theoretical content developed in the classroom had to remain accessible to CSOs, and especially to members of rural communities. Discussion elements and practical exercises: – Learning the methodological rules for data collection; – Learning how to plan an external OIF mission; – Introduction to GPS usage for data collection related to violations; – Introduction to the use of the Mapsource software for processing GIS data. II - 1) The methodology for collecting information. The introduction to the methodology for collecting information was provided by Mr. Olivier MEYE OBIANG, Legal Assistant, consultant.

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31 INTERMEDIATE REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. He structured his module around the following key points: (i) what are the objectives of data collection; (ii) how to present oneself to stakeholders when collecting data; (iii) what are the main tools for data collection; (iv) and finally, how to analyze OIF data and present one’s report. a) The objectives of data collection. According to Mr. MEYE, the objectives of data collection within the framework of an OIF are simple: – To confront forestry practices with the

regulatory provisions in force, in order to assess their level of compliance with the laws; – To draft objective OIF reports based on survey data. Continuing his explanations, Mr. MEYE indicated to the participants that "it happens that private operators and even administrations do not strictly adhere to the forestry regulatory provisions." Therefore, the objective of the tool (data collection) that they will assimilate is to confront the practices of actors with the laws in force. Illustrating his remarks, the consultant focused on the rules and procedures regarding forest management. Without being exhaustive, he noted that the Gabonese forestry law recommends, among other things: (i) the subdivision of the Sustainable Forest Management Concession (CFAD) into Managed Forest Units (UFA); (ii) the division of each UFA into annual cutting areas; (iii) the exploitation of each cutting area over a non-renewable period of 3 years.

 The observation on the ground, he will say, is that operators minimally observe the application of the provisions outlined above. Of several million hectares of forests declared under sustainable management in Gabon, only a few operators have a provisional management plan or one validated by the Water and Forests Administration, in accordance with the forestry code (Law 16/01 of December 31, 2001). Sectoral administrations, and in this case the Water and Forests, struggle to enforce the Law in its entirety. It is in such a context that collecting data for the purpose of publishing OIF reports becomes an interesting exercise, concluded Mr. mEyE. b) The presentation in the methodology of information collection coming to the presentation, during the training sessions, Mr. mEyE told the audience that to collect information, a crucial exercise that must be absolutely successful, is to know how to introduce oneself to the informant. Continuing, he added that the way one presents oneself to other stakeholders facilitates or hinders access to information. Therefore, presenting oneself well is crucial, as it builds trust with the informant and encourages them to provide you with information, even those you did not ask for. Seeking to be better understood, the consultant told the audience that presenting oneself well involves using a number of simple but effective things: – (i) formally identifying oneself by stating one’s first and last name, the name of the legal entity to which one belongs if it is an NGO, or the village of origin if you are a rural person, a native of a peripheral village of an allocated forest concession; – (ii) presenting the purpose of the mission. It is better to have a precise object at a time; – (iii) specifying the purpose of the information collection. State how your approach is useful for you, but also for the other stakeholder; – (iv) cultivating an easy approach to oneself, that is to say, remaining polite and courteous at all times. The following explanations were subsequently provided by the consultant: (i) Formally identify oneself. Regarding the necessity of knowing how to identify oneself, the consultant pointed out to the participants that informants often feel more confident when they know who they are talking to. In the rural context, the multiplicity of cultural ties sometimes brings out customary kinship relations that one would not suspect in a remote village. From there, the probability that the information you need will be given to you is high. Therefore, one must present oneself by also giving one’s cultural ties, as they may reveal a kinship relationship. However, Mr. mEyE said, this tactic is effective when collecting data from rural populations living nearby, or when questioning workers from the implicated company, especially if they are from the region. In the case of companies and administrations, it is important, when one is an NGO, to specify how long one has been working on the controversial issue. What projects have been carried out and what results have been obtained? Refer to possible collaboration frameworks to which one is associated in the context of the current work. Refer to international contexts or agendas related to your investigation that justify and legitimize your approach. In summary, the consultant

encouraged NGOs and rural people to remember that the themes they will work on are linked to a national or international global context, and that to navigate well, they must use all techniques aimed at breaking "the wall of distrust or rejection". (ii) Present the purpose of the mission Approaching an informant with a very precise mission object is interesting and effective. Thus, Mr. mEyE will tell participants that it is useful for them to define the object of investigation before going to collect information on the ground. One must present their object well, so that it is neither ambiguous nor equivocal, Mr. mEyE will say. The object must evoke a single issue. Even if the said issue is part of a broader context, NGOs in the framework of their OIF must present well-defined mission objects for data collection. To help participants better understand, exercises in formulating and presenting the object of collection took place. The aim was to bring everyone to an efficient level of precision in delineating what they want to collect information on. (iii) Specify the purpose of the information collection. Coming to the purpose of a data collection operation, the consultant will say that "the purpose is the ultimate utility of your data collection process. It is what the collected information will be used for. It justifies the necessity of seeking this information". (iv) Cultivate an easy approach to oneself. Cultivating an easy approach to oneself refers to the attitudes one should display when approaching informants, Mr. mEyE told the participants. Because it is part of the presentation process, the approach to oneself significantly influences the informant. Thus, he recommended remaining courteous, polite, but also confident. c) Data collection tools. Before discussing the tools for collecting information, the consultant often explained that there is a great diversity of documents that can serve as sources for data collection in the case of an OIF. Beyond the physical violations you will observe in the forests, he would often say, one must request the documents below and exploit their contents. Depending on the types of violations sought, we have the following documents: Specific legal documents for forestry companies Documents used for recording exploitation information: for example, work logs, logs transport documents, etc.

 Coming to the collection tools, Mr. mEyE mainly presented the survey questionnaire. He indicated that it is a tool for collecting information that can be used in various forms: 1. Collective (focus group) or individual interviews. A/ Directive form based on a questionnaire. Here, the questions are fixed, requiring precise answers. This method has an advantage: it limits the risks of bias in the collection of information. B/ Semi-directive form: The interviews are also based on a questionnaire. The difference with directive interviews lies in the degree of freedom given to the informant to answer the questions posed to them. The consultant recommended this form to the seminar participants, telling them it has the merit of being open and puts the informant at ease. d) How to analyze data and present OIF results in a report. The analysis of the collected information and the presentation of results were the subjects of this exercise. The aim was to guide NGOs and rural people in extracting from what they have recorded as data, the essential information necessary to build an OIF report. To facilitate the understanding of the audience, the consultant articulated the exercise around the following points: (1) Identifiers. These are all the useful elements that inform about the mission and the report that has been produced: (i) A unique reference number for the mission. Each mission, in fact, must have a unique reference number to avoid confusing information and weakening reports. (ii) Date and type of mission (e.g., joint, independent). (iii) Information on the visited forest concessions: location (department), type of concession (PFA, CFAD), name of the operator/company. (iv) names of the members of the OI team, government forest control agents, and any other official (local)

representative involved in the mission.

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36 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forest violations for improved governance. (2) List of abbreviations. The necessity of having a list of abbreviations, in order to make understandable to any reader the various acronyms used. (3) Executive summary. The OI mission report must offer the following qualities: Clarity and Conciseness. (i) Clarity: It is about expressing the observed facts in the simplest and easiest way to understand. Without ambiguity. For example, a report that wants to talk about wood cuts below the legal diameter for felling must say it as such. (ii) Conciseness: It is about saying things in few words, while ensuring to convey the essential. (4) Introduction. The introduction of the OI report must provide the following information: (i) Context of the mission: State whether it is a joint mission; refer to the terms of the mission program of the ministry in charge of forests, otherwise those of the OI. Specify the mission schedule. (ii) Geographical and administrative location of the investigation site. The methodology applied to seek information must be indicated in an OIF report. It is about stating: (i) whether you conducted documentary research and exploited documents related to the theme of the mission. What information did you collect in these documents? (ii) what are the reasons that led to the choice of the investigation site(s). (iii) the type of interviews you used: 1- individual directive, or group; 2- semi-directive individual or group.

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37 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forestry violations for improved governance. (7) Presentation of the results obtained. In order to optimize the presentation of results, the consultant proposed a results table model in the form below: (8) Difficulties encountered. A good report should always refer to the difficulties you encountered in the field, as these explain, to a large extent, the possible limitations to attribute to the survey results. (9) Conclusions and recommendations The conclusion of the OIF report should focus on two essential elements: (i) the main conclusion you reached at the end of the survey. An important rule to follow, the consultant will say, is to always speak conditionally. This indeed avoids giving an affirmative tone to your analysis and leaves the door open for the benefit of the doubt regarding your conclusions. (ii) recommendations: These are your suggestions, Mr. MEYE will say. However, he will continue, recommendations must always be based on what is provided by the Law, in case of non-compliance. (10) The Annexes The annexes are documents or other elements that were used during the survey, confirming the veracity of the observed violation facts. They must be attached to the report. II - 2) Planning and preparation of an OI mission. This module was conducted by Mr. Phal MEZUI NDONG, expert in organizational communication. Mr. MEZUI's presentation had the following main axes: a) Identify the objectives of the mission. Their specifics. The consultant told participants that it is necessary to always ask how a mission is specific compared to another. The general questions to ask when defining specific objectives are as follows: (i) What types of illegalities will the investigations focus on? (ii) Where will the investigations be conducted? The logic underlying the objectives. The objectives must be logical and defensible. An OSC or a community cell engaged in an OIF process must answer the following questions: (i) Why investigate this company and not another? (ii) Why investigate in one area rather than another? Realism. The objectives to be achieved must be realistic. Hence, the following question requires an objective answer: Are the objectives we set for our investigation achievable with the available resources and within the time allocated to the mission? b) Produce a detailed profile of the companies. An OIF investigation is always based on information that one

possesses. This information feeds, in a certain way, the "detailed profile" of the company implicated in the study. Some elements on the "profile" of the companies. A good knowledge of the companies to be visited maximizes the chances of success of a mission. Here are some suggestions for elements to include in the profile of the companies: (i) Contact details of the company's managers; (ii) the nature of the title held, as this nature opens up legal specifics to know; (iii) Annual permits obtained; (iv) Obligation to develop or not; (v) Existing control mission reports from the administration (and any minutes of meetings held with the company); (vi) Minutes and administrative measures taken against the company. c) Produce a work plan for the mission. The basic elements of a mission plan. In order to ensure the effectiveness and success of the mission and the achievement of objectives, a detailed mission plan must be developed. The basic elements of a mission plan are as follows: 1- General and specific objectives of the mission - What are your goals? 2- Itinerary and schedule - Where and when will you go? 3- Profile of the company or companies to be visited - Who will you meet? 4- Specific activities and tools - What will you do and how? How will these activities help achieve the objectives? 5- Investigation tools - What investigation tools will be used? 6- Equipment - What equipment do you need to bring (a checklist is recommended)?

 7- Personnel - Who is part of the mission and what will their roles be? Documentation. Before starting data collection, a list of documents to bring must be established. This list should include: (i) general legal documents (Forestry Code, guidelines for forest management, etc.); (ii) documents specific to the company: the company profile with concession maps and copies of permits and authorizations; (iii) the data collection form; (iv) the signed mission order by the authorities or project leaders. Contacts. Have the representatives of the state and/or the operating companies in the target area been informed of your mission? If not, what measures will be taken to communicate with local authorities when you arrive at your destination? If the element of surprise is important for this mission, what are the minimum contacts to be made to ensure compliance with the protocol? Logistics. Are vehicles available and ready? Is accommodation arranged? Security. What is the security situation in the region? What precautions should be taken to minimize risks? Do you have a satellite phone and a first aid kit? What is your emergency plan? Budget Have a table for equipment, per diems, accommodation, meals, fuel, contingencies, etc. d) Carry out your field mission General principles. (i) Take clear notes; (ii) use standardized documents as much as possible to collect information/data; (iii) Analyze and compare information on-site as much as possible; (iv) Pay attention to the chain of violations; (v) In the case of joint missions.

 II - 3) Data Collection by GPS. This point was developed by Mr. Samir NZIENGUI KASSA, Cartographer. He structured his intervention around the following points. (I) Generalities about GPS; (ii) starting a GPS; (iii) basic functions of GPS. a) Generalities. Regarding generalities, Mr. NZIENGUI KASSA explained that the Global Positioning System (GPS) "global positioning system" or, closer to the original acronym, "Satellite Guidance" is a geo-location tool functioning at a global level, used to accurately locate an element on the Earth's globe. b) Starting and basic functions. This part was more practical than theoretical. It was about presenting to participants what a GPS is and especially how to use it. A/ Starting (see documents in annex) B/ Basic

functions (see documents in annex) II - 4) Data Processing with Mapsource software. a) Generalities. What is Mapsource? The consultant explained to participants that it is a mapping software used to:

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42 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forestry violations for improved governance. – Transfer points, routes, and tracks recorded on GPS to a computer; – Create, display, and modify points, routes, and tracks; – Transfer cartographic data, points, routes, and tracks to GPS. b) Installation of Mapsource and interface. Insert the MapSource installation CD into your computer's drive. The installation assistant opens. Click Next. Select install, then click Next. Follow the additional instructions to install MapSource. c) Mapsource interface. The MapSource window consists of five main elements: (1) toolbars, (2) data tabs, (3) division bar, (4) graphic map, (5) Mini-map and (6) status bar.

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43 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and information collection on forest offenses to improve governance. III - Annex 3: Meeting minutes. III - 1) Preparation and execution of missions These training missions took place in Gabon. Four target forest basins were defined by the project team: Woleu-Ntem (North), Estuaire (East), Ngounié (Southeast), and Nyanga (South). a) Preparations After developing the terms of reference for the mission and defining the execution schedule, initial contact is made with the local partner NGO where the activity will take place. The aim is to check with this partner if the dates proposed by the project team for the mission are suitable. This is followed by phone calls or emails to mutually agree on the best period for conducting the activities. Once this step is completed, the partner NGO is tasked with contacting local administrative authorities to inform them of the mission that will take place in their jurisdiction. An official letter is submitted to the various concerned administrations: Governor's Office, Mayor's Office, Prefecture, Departmental Council, Gendarmerie Brigade. This letter includes, in addition to the information letter announcing the mission's arrival, the terms of reference, as well as the detailed program and various training sessions that will be provided. The understood objective of this approach is to eliminate any ambiguity and malicious interpretation of the civil society's work in the targeted locality. Once this step is completed, the local partner NGO can now focus on the necessary preparations for the mission on-site: renting a room, hotel rooms for the mission team, inviting rural communities and other NGOs that will participate in the training. Only after this process is completed does the project team go to the field to carry out the mission. b) Execution of the missions. In Woleu-Ntem. In Mitzic, the capital of the Okano Department, representatives from NGOs and rural communities from the province of Woleu-Ntem gathered for five (5) days. The meeting naturally focused on strengthening the capacities of these members of Gabon's civil society for monitoring and information collection on forest offenses to improve governance. The training, conducted in the form of conferences and debates, was led by Richlieu Zué Obame, National FLEGT / Civil Society Focal Point; Phal G. Mezuindong, expert in organizational communication; Olivier MeyeObiang, Legal Assistant, consultant; and Sam NzienguiKassa, Engineer, GIS Technician, consultant. Each presentation led to intense and fruitful debates that revealed, in some cases, the expectations or sometimes the concerns of the participants. For instance, we note this exhortation from the vice-president of the Okano Departmental Council (where the training took place), who indicated at the end of the meeting that: "As a local authority that participated in this training session, I am well placed to attest that the village communities and NGOs of Woleu-Ntem now have the necessary technical

capacities to assist the country's authorities in the effort for better governance of our forest resources. I am even more pleased that this training is taking place just a few months before the implementation of the Decentralization Law that Gabon has adopted. Often lacking the expertise to properly assess the practices of economic operators operating in our administrative jurisdictions, the local administrations of the Woleu-Ntem province can now count on NGOs and rural communities to assist them. For my part, I will advocate for a formal partnership to be quickly established between the NGOs of Mitzic and our Departmental Council. This is absolutely essential for us." For their part, some members of local NGOs, such as the Dynamique Mitzicoise, expressed their concerns about the status they would have, given that the government does not seem very inclined to grant civil society the right to conduct observation missions. "Our main concern in implementing the Independent Observatory comes from the fact that if we do not have a mandate from the government, how will we conduct our observation missions safely? We all know that logging is a big money business. How will we stick our noses into the illegal practices occurring in the various forest concessions without worrying? What assurance will protect us from the real dangers we face?".

44 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and information collection on forest offenses to improve governance. In Estuaire. The training took place in a rural area in Meyang, a grouping of villages located between Kango, the capital of the Komo-Kango department, and Ntoum, the capital of the Komo-Mondah department. Participants arrived from all departments of the Estuaire province. Local authorities, whom we have involved since the beginning of the FLEGT process in our activities, also participated. Thus, during the discussions that followed the various presentations, several questions raised by participants were regularly brought up in the debates. For some, "Now that we are sufficiently trained to conduct field observation missions, how will we do so when the time comes, given that our structures do not have sufficient means to purchase the necessary equipment? Moreover, observation missions also require budgets. Where will we find them? And if these budgets are available, what power will we have to persuade operators in the timber sector to let us enter their concessions to conduct our investigations?" For others, "We feel that the government and we are not engaged in the same process. Indeed, as much as we are progressing to be ready for the FLEGT implementation date in Europe, we feel that the government is dragging its feet more and more. So we are left wondering how we will put into practice all the knowledge acquired if the state does not engage more?" We also note this reaction from a village chief who, after the training, indicated that "for us, the auxiliary command authorities, this training is more than beneficial because it allows us to accurately identify the various infractions committed daily by the companies operating in our area. Previously, it was difficult for us to confront these operators about their often unorthodox practices due to our ignorance of the law. Today, thanks to the training we have just received, this gap has now been filled."

46 INTERIM REPORT II Capacity building of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities for monitoring and information collection on forest offenses to improve governance. In Ngounié A notable feature in this province in the Southeast of Gabon is the increasing attention that local authorities in this area are giving to the activities of civil society, particularly their willingness to support local NGOs. It is in this spirit that the governor of the province stated: "The NGOs you have just trained deserve to be utilized effectively so that they do not lose the knowledge acquired. For my part, as the primary authority of the province, I can

assure you of my commitment to support all their efforts, as long as they contribute to improving forest governance in our country. We all know that the state will never have enough human resources to control what happens in the various permits it issues to forest operators. Therefore, I think it would be appropriate for trained members of civil society in independent forest observation techniques to be engaged by our administration to track down the wrongdoers." And as if to echo the words of the provincial authority, local civil society members in Ngounié issued a joint statement calling: "Do not abandon us! The FLEGT process, in which you have engaged us, has generated real hopes within our populations, who hope to finally see the positive outcomes of the exploitation of their forests, and especially, the end of the plundering currently taking place in our areas. We want the lessons learned to truly serve a purpose. These are practical trainings that only need to be implemented on the ground. So be our messengers to the initiators of this process, and tell them that we are ready to go to the field to ob-

47 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forestry violations for improved governance. To serve, collect, and document who is entitled to address the bad practices in force in the forestry concessions here. Tell them that the wrongdoings we denounce today can change if the operators in the timber sector realize that there are people on the ground to track their misdeeds and reveal them to the administration. This can greatly contribute to slowing down the destruction of our forests. Tell them! » In Nyanga "Everything has been done. Now, we are waiting for the follow-up you will give to our training." These were the words of the head of ANCE, a local organization in Nyanga, when he spoke at the end of the training session on independent forest observation techniques. "We hope that the Civil Society Observatory will come into being; otherwise, what would be the point of having followed the process up to this day? Every day, we witness the violations committed by loggers. We will see them even more today, as we now know, thanks to the training we just completed, the different types of violations we were not aware of. Give us the opportunity to officially denounce these bad practices so that the State can take its responsibilities in the face of corrupt loggers. In short, set up the Observatory," he concluded. This call was approved by all participants in the training. Closing the training session, the mayor of the municipality of Tchibanga, the capital of the Nyanga province, emphasized inviting local civil society members to capitalize on the knowledge gained during the various training sessions. For the city's chief magistrate, there is no doubt that this knowledge will be a contribution to improving forest governance in the province, and thus throughout Gabon. "Whether we like it or not, we will need you soon. Indeed, the autonomous management of our municipalities brought about by decentralization will inevitably push us to call upon your expertise. From now on, you are a qualified workforce waiting for employment," he emphasized. IV - Appendix 4: Attendance lists. Training session in Woleu-Ntem (Mitzic)

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49 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forestry violations for improved governance. Training session in Ngounié (Mouila)

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50 INTERIM REPORT II Strengthening the capacities of members of Gabon's civil society and local communities in monitoring and collecting information on forestry violations for improved governance. V - Appendix 5: Some presentations.

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