

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**CIVIC RESPONSE MAKES GIANT STRIDES IN GHANA'S FOREST SECTOR WITH CSIFM-GHANA PROJECT**

Accra, 28th November, 2018. Civic Response has made giant strides in Ghana's forest sector through the implementation of its Civil Society-led Independent Forest Monitoring in Ghana (CSIFM-Ghana) Project.

Under the auspices of the project which aimed at ensuring that civil society is actively monitoring the issuance of a credible, transparent, and acceptable FLEGT licence in Ghana, Civic Response built the capacity of selected representatives of Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) on TVD legality verification audits. This was in order for CSOs to be able to effectively participate as observers in TVD legality verification audits with a view to enhancing transparency, integrity and credibility of the GhLAS, as well as the respect for community rights enshrined in the VPA legality definition.

Also under the auspices of the CSIFM-Ghana Project, Civic Response trained community representatives and equipped them with smartphones to undertake community level forest real time monitoring. The training aimed at equipping monitors to use a mobile application to collect data on forest infringements. Civic Response has since received alerts on infringements and has resolved verified alerts.

The greatest milestone of the Project though was the building and launching of the **Ghana Timber Transparency Portal**; a public portal that provides access to information on logging in Ghana. The portal can be accessed by all stakeholders both in and beyond Ghana in real time via the url: www.ghanatimbertransparency.info. The portal was built as part of governance reforms in the forest sector happening as a result of the Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) signed between Ghana and the European Union in 2009.

This interactive public portal provides information on the various valid logging permits, timber logging companies and their areas of operation; information on exports of timber from Ghana, and other periodic reports that are generated from time to time. This public portal links to the electronic Ghana Wood Tracking System (GWTS), which is a complete database of information on timber production process in Ghana.

The CSIFM-Ghana Project which was being implemented under the auspices of the FAO-EU FLEGT PROGRAMME with funding from European Union, the Swedish International Cooperation Agency and the United Kingdom Department of International Development ends in December 2018.

Signed

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