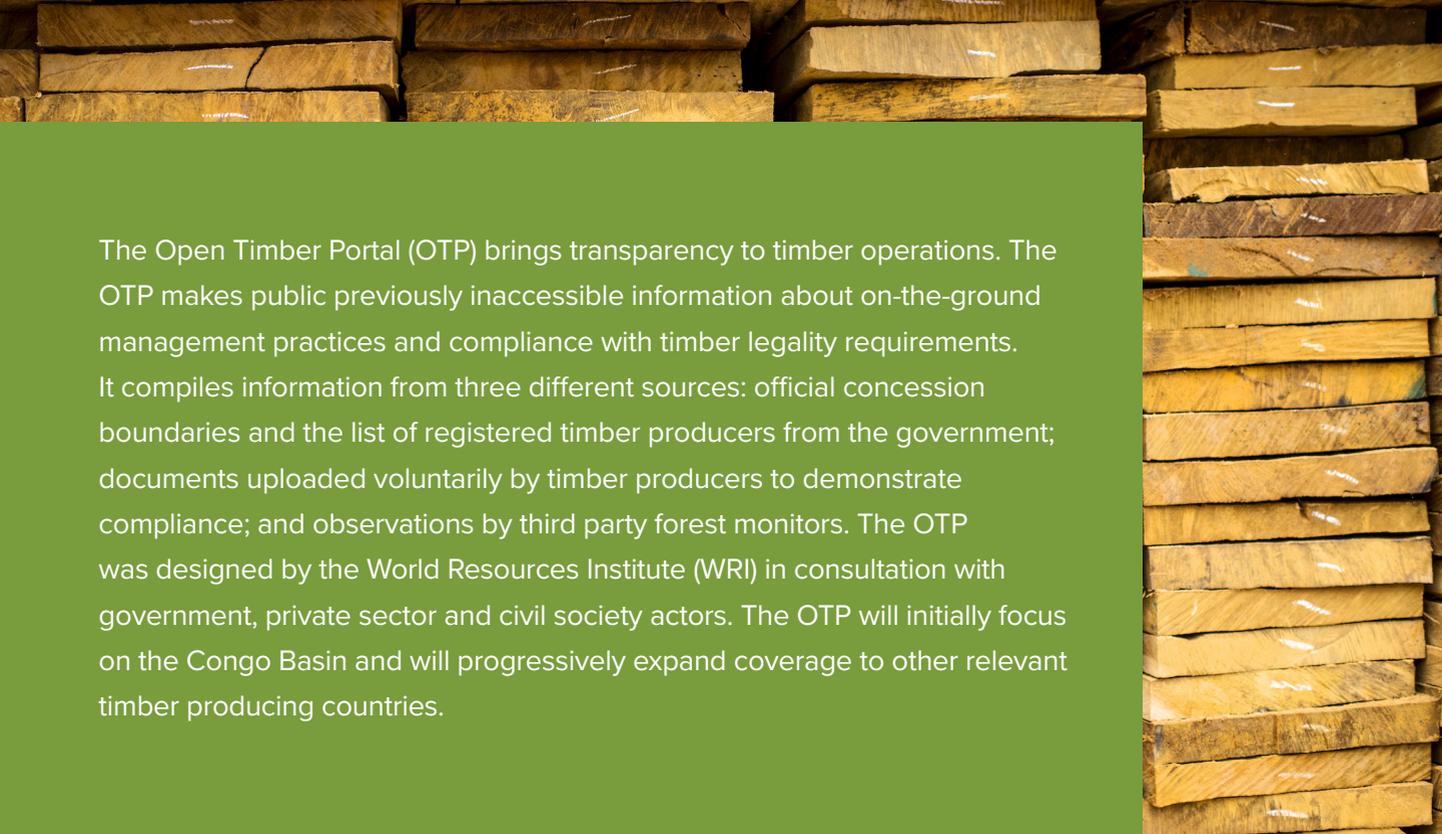# OPEN TIMBER PORTAL

INCENTIVIZING LEGAL TIMBER TRADE BY IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

The Open Timber Portal is a web platform that promotes compliance with legal requirements in timber harvest and trade by compiling information from government, private sector and third-party forest monitors in producer countries.

The Open Timber Portal (OTP) brings transparency to timber operations. The OTP makes public previously inaccessible information about on-the-ground management practices and compliance with timber legality requirements. It compiles information from three different sources: official concession boundaries and the list of registered timber producers from the government; documents uploaded voluntarily by timber producers to demonstrate compliance; and observations by third party forest monitors. The OTP was designed by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in consultation with government, private sector and civil society actors. The OTP will initially focus on the Congo Basin and will progressively expand coverage to other relevant timber producing countries.

WHERE WILL THE OTP OPERATE?

The OTP structure has been developed to be deployed in any timber exporting country. The platform will initially focus on the Congo Basin, expanding to other regions as resources and opportunities allow.

CAMEROON
CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

GABON
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- Implemented in 2018
- Implemented in 2019
- Implemented in 2020

WHY IS THE OTP NECESSARY?

Better sourcing needs better information. Timber importers and consumers are increasingly interested in proof of legal and sustainable supply chains. Yet, outside of forest certification, little information exists on relative performance of timber producers. It creates unfair competition towards the best players and undermines consumer confidence in tropical timber.

Many initiatives, no central point of coordination. The past 15 years have seen a proliferation of national and international initiatives to improve legality and sustainability of the commercial forest sector, yet there is no central point of coordination of information on producers. This has resulted in inefficiencies for producers and importers, and limited effectiveness of these initiatives. The OTP will serve as a one-stop shop for information on timber producers.

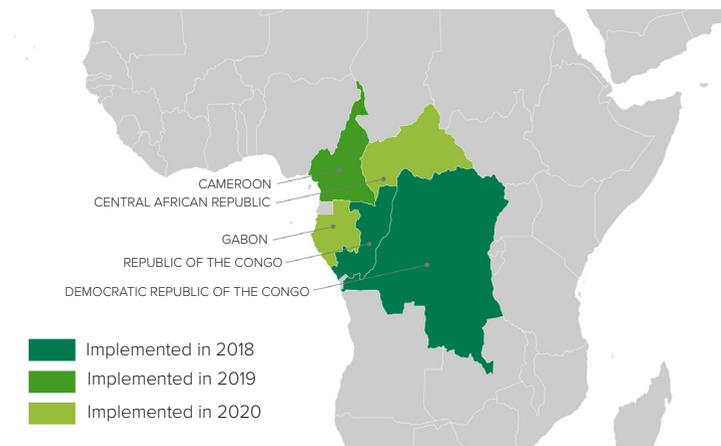**Leveling the playing field among timber suppliers.** The OTP assesses performance of all timber producers against a standard set of documents and metrics—enabling market differentiation, complementary to certification. It facilitates companies to access the market and build consumer confidence via voluntary disclosure of legality documents.

For timber legality initiatives to succeed, effective enforcement is needed. Frameworks regulating timber legality have evolved over the past decade. While wood importers now have to comply with due diligence requirements, they continue to be handicapped by inadequate access to information. The OTP supports the enforcement of demand-side policies such as the Korea Act on the Sustainable Use of Timbers, the Japan Clean Wood Act, the Australia Illegal Logging Prohibition Act, the EU Timber Regulation and the U.S Lacey Act.

WHO WILL USE THE OTP & FOR WHICH APPLICATIONS?

Timber companies concerned about their reputation and market access can:

- Use one tool to answer multiple requests to provide documentation on compliance
- Differentiate themselves in the marketplace thanks to a transparency ranking system, and benefit from the OTP's visibility among importers, enforcement authorities and the public

Government agencies in producer countries can:

- Improve forest law enforcement and monitoring
- Position the national forest sector positively among timber importers, since improved information access helps mitigate sourcing risks

Timber buyers across the supply chain can:

- Easily access key information for their due diligence processes
- Quickly compare their suppliers to other producers

Enforcement agencies in importing countries can:

- Easily access producer compliance records
- Conduct desk research and target enforcement actions

Third-party forest monitors in producer countries can:

- Improve the efficiency of their monitoring
- Enhance the visibility of their work and heighten impact

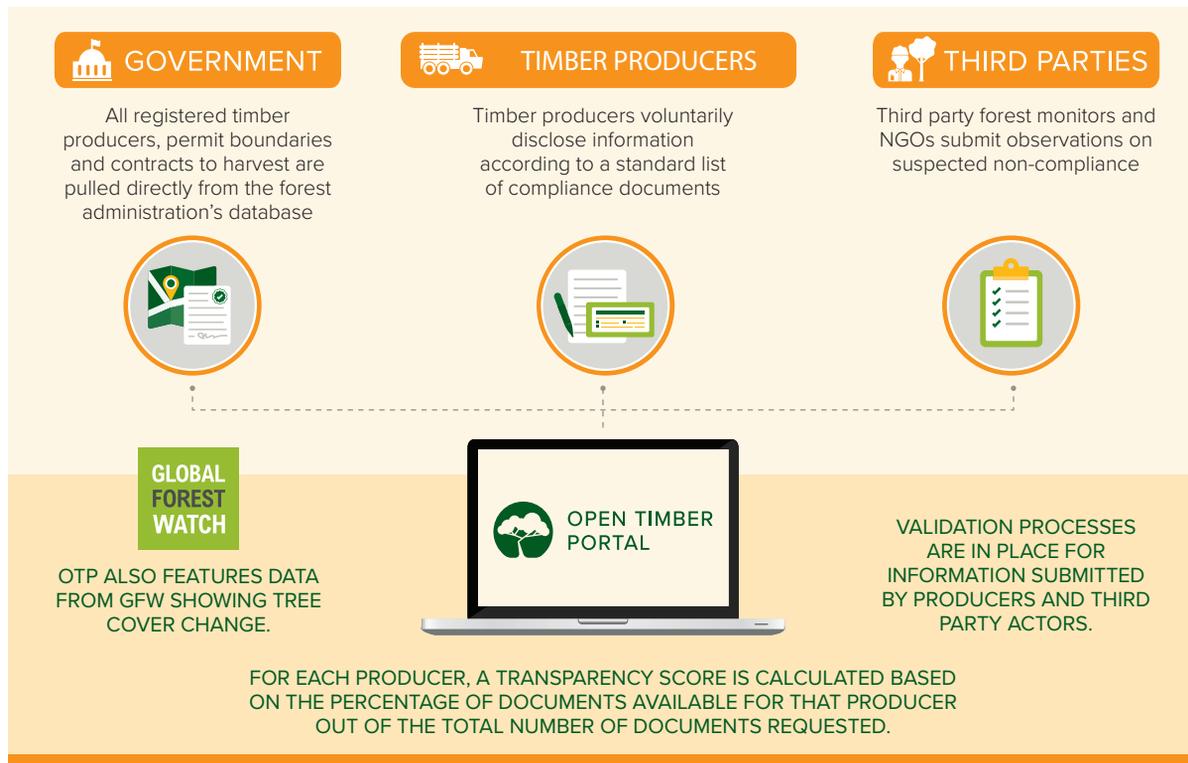**Civil society organizations and NGOs** can:

- Campaign more effectively by basing claims on reliable and publicly accessible information

Donors supporting improved forest sector legality can:

- More easily track the impact of projects that support the work of third party forest monitors
- Facilitate coordination of forest sector projects

HOW DOES THE OTP WORK?

The OTP compiles information on forest operations from three different sources:

GOVERNMENT

All registered timber producers, permit boundaries and contracts to harvest are pulled directly from the forest administration's database

TIMBER PRODUCERS

Timber producers voluntarily disclose information according to a standard list of compliance documents

THIRD PARTIES

Third party forest monitors and NGOs submit observations on suspected non-compliance

GLOBAL FOREST WATCH

OTP ALSO FEATURES DATA FROM GFW SHOWING TREE COVER CHANGE.

OPEN TIMBER PORTAL

VALIDATION PROCESSES ARE IN PLACE FOR INFORMATION SUBMITTED BY PRODUCERS AND THIRD PARTY ACTORS.

FOR EACH PRODUCER, A TRANSPARENCY SCORE IS CALCULATED BASED ON THE PERCENTAGE OF DOCUMENTS AVAILABLE FOR THAT PRODUCER OUT OF THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DOCUMENTS REQUESTED.

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ABOUT WRI

World Resources Institute (WRI) is a global research organization spanning more than 50 countries, with offices in Africa, the U.S, China, India, Brazil, Europe, Mexico and Indonesia. Our more than 600 experts and staff work closely with leaders to turn big ideas into action to sustain our natural resources—the foundation of economic opportunity and human well-being.

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