

**ITTO has made a substantial contribution to the development of forest and timber certification**

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**I**TTOWAS one of the first international intergovernmental organisations to address the evolving issue of forest and timber certification. Intense and protracted policy discussion within the International Tropical Timber Council in the early 1990s (stimulated in part by an ITTO report on incentives in 1991) led ITTO to commission its first study of the issue in 1993. Since then it has: conducted several more studies; developed guidelines, criteria and indicators and auditing systems for sustainable forest management; financed projects to assist producing member countries to develop approaches to certification and to progress towards sustainable forest management; participated in and sponsored and jointly organised international seminars; and, most recently, convened its own international workshop on the subject.

## ITTO studies

To date, ITTO has commissioned six studies relating to forest and timber certification. These are:

- *Incentives in Producer and Consumer Countries to Promote Sustainable Development of Tropical Forests* (1991) by the Oxford Forestry Institute and Timber Research and Development Associates;
- *The Economic Linkages Between the International Trade in Tropical Timber and the Sustainable Management of Tropical Forests* (1993) by the London Environmental Economics Centre (LEEC);
- *Certification Schemes for all Timber and Timber Products* (1994) by Baharuddin Haji Ghazali and Markku Simula;
- *Markets and Market Segments for Certified Timber and Timber Products* (1995) by John Wadsworth and Peter Boateng;
- *Development in the Formulation and Implementation of Certification Schemes for All Internationally Traded Timber and Timber Products* (1996) by Baharuddin Haji Ghazali and Markku Simula; and
- *Timber Certification: Progress and Issues* (1997) by Baharuddin Haji Ghazali and Markku Simula.

The purpose of these studies was to collect, collate, analyse and disseminate relevant information on forest and timber certification with a view to enhancing awareness and understanding of the developments surrounding the issue and its implications for the continuing effort to enhance the management of tropical forests in member countries. The study undertaken in 1994 was discussed by an ITTO Working Party on Certification of All Timber Products held in Cartagena de Indias, Colombia, the findings and recommendations of which were considered by the International Tropical Timber Council at its 16th Session.

## ITTO policy documents

ITTO's mission of assisting efforts to bring tropical forests under sustainable management has included the development of a pioneering series of ITTO guidelines and criteria and indicators. To date, the series comprises:

- *ITTO Guidelines for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests* (1990);
- *ITTO Criteria for the Measurement of Sustainable Tropical Forest Management* (1992);
- *ITTO Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Forests* (1993);
- *ITTO Guidelines on the Conservation of Biological Diversity in Tropical Production Forests* (1993);
- *ITTO Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests* (1997);
- *The ITTO Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests* (1998)
- *ITTO Manuals for the Application of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests* (1999); and
- *ITTO Guidelines on the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests* (in press).

This series constitutes a compendium of tools essential to ITTO members in enhancing the management of tropical forests and in enabling them to engage in voluntary forest and timber certification. ITTO has conducted a series of workshops in member countries to train trainers in applying the ITTO criteria and indicators and the use of the ITTO manuals in the field. It is currently in the process of conducting more national-level workshops in ten member countries to train officials, forest managers and forest concessionaires in using the *ITTO Manuals for the Application of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests*.

## Developing auditing systems

ITTO has also undertaken work on the development of auditing systems as a tool for monitoring and verifying progress towards sustainable forest management and as an essential component of forest and timber certification. This work includes:

- *Comparative Study on the Auditing Systems of Sustainable Forest Management* (2000) by E.O. Nsenkyire and Markku Simula; and
- *Framework for an Auditing System for ITTO Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Forest Management* (2001) by Baharuddin Haji Ghazali and Markku Simula.

Based on the auditing framework, ITTO is now developing a training package for the conduct of training courses in those ITTO producing member countries that wish to establish credible auditing systems for the ITTO criteria and indicators.

## ITTO projects

Project activities are an important component of ITTO's work and a practical means of assisting developing member countries to implement appropriate policy initiatives relevant to the mandate and objectives of the Organization. Since its establishment, ITTO has funded more than five hundred projects, pre-projects and activities valued at more

than US\$230 million. All ITTO project activities are concerned with one or more aspects relating to the management, conservation and sustainable development of tropical forests. A number of these projects are related to forest and timber certification, particularly:

- *Training Development on Assessment of Sustainable Forest Management in Indonesia* (PD 1/95 REV.4 (M)); and
- *Development of Export Market Intelligence Monitoring System in Fiji* (PD 3/97 REV.1 (M)).

As a result of the project in Indonesia, about 150 sustainable-forest-management assessors are now registered by the Indonesian Ecolabelling Institute (LEI). According to LEI, this pool of well-trained and more-experienced personnel have developed to the point where the activation of sound ecolabelling certification has become possible in Indonesia. The project in Fiji developed a timber-flow monitoring system to monitor the chain of custody of harvested timber from the point of origin to the point of export. Several new project proposals relating to forest and timber certification have been submitted to ITTO and will be considered by the International Tropical Timber Council for approval and financing after review by the Expert Panel on Project Appraisal.

In the related field of criteria and indicators, the following ITTO projects are being implemented:

- *Implementation and Evaluation of the Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Natural Forest Management* (Colombia; PD 8/97 REV.2 (F));
- *Publication, Testing and Clarification of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainable Management of Gabon's Forests* (Gabon; PD 9/98 REV.2 (F));
- *Testing of the Revised ITTO Criteria and Indicators and Dissemination of Results Applying to Cameroon* (Cameroon; PD 23/99 REV.2 (F));
- *Training of Trainers in the Application of the ITTO and the National Criteria and Indicators of Sustainable Forest Management at the Forest Management Unit Level* (Indonesia; PD 42/00 REV.2 (F)); and
- *Promotion of Sustainable Management of African Forests* (PD 124/01 REV.2 (M)); to be implemented by the African Timber Organization and ITTO).

## International seminars and workshops

Over the years, ITTO has participated in a number of international seminars and workshops on forest and timber certification. On 19–20 February 2001, for example, ITTO cooperated with FAO and GTZ in the FAO-GTZ-ITTO Seminar on Building Confidence Among Forest Certification Schemes and Their Supporters, which was held at FAO headquarters in Rome. A year later, ITTO convened its own workshop, the ITTO International Workshop on Comparability and Equivalence of Forest Certification Schemes, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (see box for the workshop's recommendations).

## Ongoing work

Continuing ITTO work on forest and timber certification is driven by the fact that certification and labelling are making great strides in developed countries while tropical

and other developing countries are lagging behind. There is thus a clear and urgent need to support the efforts of those developing countries that want to engage in certification and labelling to promote sustainable forest management and to enhance market acceptance of their forest products.

The latest decision taken by the Council on forest and timber certification is Decision 11(XXXII), titled 'The potential role of phased approaches to certification in tropical timber producer countries as a tool to promote sustainable forest management'. Stemming from this decision, ITTO is now undertaking a study of the potential role of phased approaches to certification as a tool for promoting sustainable forest management. When this study is completed, ITTO will convene three regional workshops to disseminate and discuss its results and implications and to offer recommendations to the International Tropical Timber Council. At the same time the Organization will do its part to facilitate improved understanding, information-sharing and dialogue between interested parties from both consumer and producer countries on phased approaches to certification.

## Future work

The future ITTO agenda on forest and timber certification is likely to develop mainly from the results of the above ITTO on-going work in this area and also in related fields such as auditing systems and criteria and indicators. Further developments in the evolving issue of forest and timber certification at the national, regional and international levels are also likely to impact on future ITTO work in this field.

## What the workshop reckoned

The ITTO International Workshop on the Comparability and Equivalence of Forest Certification Schemes, held 3–4 April 2002, was attended by 68 participants with a keen interest in certification. Participants agreed that ITTO's role in promoting sustainable forest management and its certification should be strengthened, and they made the following recommendations. ITTO should:

- provide support to its producing member countries for capacity-building in forest certification, including institutional strengthening, stakeholder participation, auditing systems, training, and better understanding of certification. The Organization should be more responsive to project proposals related to certification;
- monitor progress in the comparability and equivalence of certification systems and explore opportunities for promoting convergence in forest certification standards in member countries, including through regional initiatives;
- facilitate discussion involving stakeholders and provide support for exploring the feasibility of a phased approach to certification as a means of improving equitable access to certification by producers;
- recognise the potential contribution of forest management and chain-of-custody certification to the control of illegal logging and trade in tropical timber;
- facilitate dialogue and cooperation between consuming and producing member countries, and educate stakeholders and the general public about the principles and complexities of sustainable forest management and of the certification of natural and planted forests;
- give more emphasis in its efforts to promoting enabling conditions for sustainable forest management and its certification in its member countries;
- support research to examine the effectiveness and efficiency of alternative sets of indicators for satisfying specific certification criteria and to clarify certification impact on sustainable forest management;
- keep its members informed on initiatives related to international frameworks for the mutual recognition between certification systems; and
- provide support to regional certification fora and related organisations in the tropical regions.