

**ITTO Project PD 264/04 Rev.3 (M,I)**

**Timbers of Tropical Africa Part 1: Group 7(1) within the  
PROTA Programme (Ghana)**

**Prepared for ITTO**

**by**

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## ACRONYMS

ATO	African Timber Organization
CTA	Technical Centre for Agriculture and Rural Cooperation
FORIG	Forestry Research Institute of Ghana
GTMO	Ghana Timber Millers Organization
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTC	International Tropical Timber Council
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
PROSEA	Plant Resources of South-East Asia
PROTA	Plant Resources of Tropical Africa
WU	Wageningen University

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## Executive Summary

The ex-post evaluation of a Project is a collection of information, based on documents and on-the-spot assessment. It includes an in-depth analysis of the implementation performance and the impact of the Project after its completion. The intent of an ex-post evaluation is to establish how well the Project served its purpose and how effective and efficient was its implementation. It is also to assess aspects related to the sustainability of the Project and identify the lessons learned that could be applied in future projects design and implementation.

The ex-post evaluation of Project PD 264/04 Rev03 (M ,I)- Timbers of Tropical Africa Part 1: Group 7(1) Within the PROTA Programme, was recommended to the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) by its Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence (CEM) at its Forty-third Session, held in Yokohama, Japan from 9 to 14 November 2009. The Committee recommendation was endorsed by the Council, and Dr. Ivan Tomaselli, from Brazil, was selected and engaged by the ITTO Secretariat in June 2010 as the consultant to conduct the ex-post evaluation.

The Project was conceived under PROTA-Plant Resources of Tropical Africa, a foundation with headquarters at Wageningen University, in The Netherlands, and branch offices/representatives in several African countries. It is an initiative similar to PROSEA-Plant Resources of South-east Asia developed for South-East Asian countries in the 1990s.

The initiative takes into consideration that there is a large amount of dispersed data on plant resources in Tropical Africa, and it is important to organize and make the information accessible to individual users. The aim of the PROTA Programme is to document the existing wealth of dispersed information on the plant resources of Tropical Africa, and to make it available for education, extension work, research and industry.

The PROTA working programme is subdivided into 16 Commodities Groups, and timbers constitute the Commodity Group 7. A project proposal for the first part of the timbers group was submitted by the Government of Ghana for the consideration of ITTO in 2004, and was approved and financed in 2005. PROTA was designated as the implementing agency.

The Project involved carrying out an inventory of available information and a critical compilation of existing knowledge on the timber species of Tropical Africa in the form of a Webdatabase, Handbook and CD-ROM, that will serve as a reference framework for policy-makers, education and extension workers, researchers and employers in industry (direct beneficiaries), and a rich source for the production of derived materials for communities depending on the forest (indirect beneficiaries).

The development objective of the proposed project was to “improve access to interdisciplinary data on the timbers of Tropical Africa as a basis for sustainable tropical forest management, and to improve networking leading to better cooperation and information exchange between forestry actors”.

Two specific objectives were formulated: i) to gather, evaluate and synthesize the dispersed information on the ‘Timbers of Tropical Africa’ through improved networking and ii) to facilitate wide access of target beneficiaries to the information on the ‘Timbers of Tropical Africa’ in electronic and printed forms.

The Project was formulated with a duration of 3 years. The agreement between the Government of Ghana, the implementing agency (PROTA) and ITTO was signed in September 2005, and implementation commenced in January 2006. Dr. Joseph Cobbinah, the former Director of the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), was designated as the Project Coordinator. The total project budget was US\$1,608,299.00. The ITTO contribution was US\$577,886.00. The remaining fund came from the Dutch Government (US\$403,710.00) and PROTA (US\$626,703.00).

The development objective of the Project was achieved. In general it improved access to interdisciplinary data on timbers of Tropical Africa as a basis for sustainable tropical forest management, and also improved networking, leading to a better cooperation and information exchange between forestry actors.

The two specific objectives and the proposed outputs of the Project were also generally achieved.

Under the first specific objective the amount of information collected, evaluated and synthesized surpassed the original target. A small deviation (reduction) was found in the number of TEXTFILE-TIMBERS, but the reduction was agreed at the First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee held in Accra on 5 October 2006. The number of review articles was reduced from 350, on 350 species, to 275 but a larger number of species was covered.

Outputs related to the second specific objective of the Project were also achieved. A Web Database, Handbooks and CDs with information on 511 African Timbers species (English and French) are now available. After the completion of the Project the Web Database, <http://www.prota.org>, was upgraded and is now interactive. The analysis of the completion report of the Project points out that Output 2.4- Derived Products-Timbers was not fully achieved. An output derived from the Project was the brainstorm workshop held in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2008. The workshop led, after the project completion period, to a brochure with conclusions and recommendations for the primary beneficiaries.

The Web Data Base, the Handbook and the CD-ROMs (available in two languages- English and French) had a positive impact of facilitating the access of stakeholders to information on tropical timber species in Africa and this will facilitate the implementation of sustainable forest management in continent.

During the Ex-post Evaluation it was not possible to properly assess the utilization of the information by the beneficiaries. Nevertheless it seems that the Project outputs could have had a broader impact. It was noticed, for instance, that the private sector had a minor role in the implementation of the project, and the access to the information generated by the Project was, in principle, limited.

It also seems that the indirect beneficiaries mentioned in the Project Document (communities depending on the forests) were neglected. The Project Document mentions that the information to the indirect beneficiaries would be made available through specially prepared materials, such as brochures and leaflets, by the extension service or through other means, but it seems that the related activities were not implemented.

PROTA expects that the capacity building activities of the Project, coupled with the recruitments in the Network Office in Africa, and a phased transfer of responsibilities to institutions in Africa, would ensure the internalization of the programme in Africa and the sustainability of the related activities. A preliminary assessment points out that problems might be faced in ensuring the sustainability of the programme. This seems already to be the case of PROSEA in Asia.

The Project Document does not make clear reference to the participation of regional stakeholders in the consultation process during the Project formulation phase. It seems that most of the discussions involving the Project design were done within PROTA, taking into consideration the experience and the structure of the organization. Negotiations were held, at a later stage, with the Government of Ghana to have the Project Proposal submitted to ITTO for funding.

The information provided in the documents made available for this ex-post evaluation, show that during implementation, the structure of the Project was simplified, and in spite of the involvement of several partnership institutions and countries, the number of organizations and countries actually involved were reduced.

The structure for the implementation of the Project included a General Coordinator located in Ghana, that had a general role of supervising and reporting to ITTO, and an operational coordinator in The Netherlands. Three organizations are listed in the Completion Report as “leading institutions” in the implementation of the Project: FORIG, Ghana; Wageningen University, the Netherlands and Agropolis International, France. The three institutions were represented in the editorial team.

The overall implementation was efficient and effective, and this was basically due to the structure of PROTA and the experience of the team involved in its implementation. The efficient internal and external monitoring also played an important role.

The location of a General Coordinator in Ghana and the main operational team in The Netherlands did not seem to have created major limitations. Efficient communication and good planning minimized the problems. Some delays were faced involving the implementation of certain activities, but these did not affect the overall work, and the Project was completed within the planned time schedule.

## **Lessons Learned**

The most relevant lessons learned from the implementation of this Project can be summarized as:

- i. Accumulated experience and a well established structure of the Implementing Agency is important for a proper formulation of a Project Proposal, and specially in the implementation of the Project activities;
- ii. A well established management structure for the Project allows that operational problems, which frequently happen during the implementation of a complex Project such as this, are quickly identified. In the implementation of this Project, immediate and proper actions were adopted to overcome problems, and this facilitated the implementation and the proposed objectives were fully achieved;
- iii. Efficient communication and good cooperation is important in the implementation of projects that involve several persons/organizations working in different sites / regions. This is also important in Projects manipulating a large quantity of materials/ documents;
- iv. The involvement of a large number of organization/ offices/ collaborators tends to create constraints in the implementation of a Project. It seems to be better to concentrate the cooperation within a limited number of selected/ key organizations. This seems to be the strategy that was, at the end, adopted in the implementation of this Project.

## **Conclusions**

The main conclusions of the ex-post evaluation of this Project are as follows:

1. This Project was well designed and efficiently implemented. The planned objectives were achieved, and the outputs were delivered within the time schedule proposed in the Project Proposal Document. Accumulated experience of the team involved and a well established management structure at the Implementing Agency was important to facilitate the implementation of the Project.
2. The value of implementing this regional and inter-continental Project needs to be recognized. Its implementation involved several Anglo Franco countries in Africa and several authors, and had an interaction with PROTA offices and other organizations in Europe. This was a challenge to the Implementing Agency, that was able to carry out the activities efficiently, effectively and on time, with no extension in the Project duration and additional financing;

3. The Project was in line with ITTA-2004 Objectives and with ITTO Yokohama Work Plan, and outputs will contribute to improve the implementation of sustainable forest management in Africa, facilitate the education of younger generation and increase the cooperation among regional stakeholders;
4. The work continued after the completion of the Project, and activities were implemented to improve the dissemination of the outputs;
5. One example of activity implemented after the completion of the Project was the Web Database upgraded, that is now interactive. Besides the possibility of a continuous update of the information the interactive Web Database will facilitate the implementation of the Part 2 of the Project;
6. One of the problems identified was the limited involvement of the private sector and communities groups, listed as direct and indirect beneficiaries of the Project. It seems that the private sector had a minor role and only participated in some meetings of the Steering Committee. No reference was made to the involvement of the communities;
7. In the dissemination of the Project outputs the focus was mainly on governments and academic groups (universities and research organizations), with less attention to the private sector, the main responsible for the implementation of sustainable forest management. It also seems also that the communities were neglected. The creation of special materials mentioned in the Project Proposal, such as brochures and leaflets, and the development of activities to reach the communities, such as extension services or through other means, was not implemented;
8. It was noted that all the 23 key stakeholders that participated in the brainstorm workshop held in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2008, to discuss the findings of the Project and to formulate recommendations to PROTA, were representatives of governments, research organizations, universities and PROTA regional offices. No representative of the private sector or communities participated;
9. The Project has continued and the implementation of a second phase, covering the remaining 500 timber species of Tropical Africa, is expected to be concluded in 2012. PROTA expects that the capacity building activities of the Project, coupled with the recruitments in the Network Office in Africa, and phased transfer of responsibilities to institutions in Africa would ensure the internalization of the programme in Africa, and the sustainability of the activities related to the Project. Apparently so far this has been only partially achieved. Activities related and generated from the "interactive Web Database" will need to be implemented after the completion of the second phase of the Project. A preliminary assessment points out that problems might be faced to ensure the sustainability of the programme. This already seems to be the case of PROSEA.

## **Recommendations**

As previously mentioned the Project was carefully implemented and the objectives proposed were in general achieved. Some recommendations can be made to improve the ongoing implementation of phase 2 of this Project, as well as the implementation of other projects.

The main recommendations from this ex post evaluation are as follows:

- i. In spite of the fact that the second phase of this project is already in implementation, it is recommended to examine the possibility to consider having a stronger involvement of the private sector. Also, if still possible, improvements should be introduced in the dissemination of information to communities, the secondary beneficiaries;



- ii. The assessment made points out that, the dissemination of the Project outputs can be improved. Stakeholders need to be better informed and educated on the use and benefits of information available in the Web Page, printed material and CD-ROM. Mechanisms to improve dissemination should be identified and implemented before the completion of the second phase of this Project. The mechanisms could include the preparation of promotion material for specific stakeholders, implementation of seminars and workshops, participation in conferences and other specific activities;
- iii. More efforts are needed to ensure the sustainability of the Project. The Project has implemented activities involving capacity building but this seems not to be sufficient. It is recommended to identify effective actions to be implemented during the remaining two years of work of phase 2 to facilitate the achievement of the sustainability of the Project.

The strengthening of an African organization and the establishment of a Regional Network, together with a phased transfer of responsibilities seems to be good options to internalize the programme in Africa and ensure its sustainability.



## **1-Introduction**

The ex-post evaluation of Project PD 264/04 Rev03 (M,I)- Timbers of Tropical Africa Part 1: Group 7(1) Within the PROTA Programme, was recommended to the International Tropical Timber Council- ITTC by the ITTO Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence at its Forty-third Session, held in Yokohama, Japan in November 2009.

The intention of the ex-post evaluation to establish, after the completion, how well the Project achieved its purpose, how effective and efficient was its implementation. It also assesses aspects related to the Project sustainability, and the lessons learned that could be considered in designing and implementing other projects in the future.

Project PD 264/04 Rev03 was submitted to ITTO by the Government of Ghana, having the Plant Resources of Tropical Africa- PROTA Foundation, from The Netherlands, as the implementing agency. This Project Proposal covers 350 timber species from Tropical Africa, out of an estimated 900 timber species.

The general objective of the Project was “to improve access to interdisciplinary data on timbers of Tropical Africa as a basis for sustainable tropical forest management, and to improve networking leading to better cooperation and information exchange between forest actors”.

It was expected that after the completion of the project an inventory and critical compilation of existing knowledge on the timbers of tropical Africa would be available in the form of a Webdatabase, Handbook and CD-ROM, and that will serve as a reference framework for policy-makers, education and extension workers, researchers and employers in industry. Indirect beneficiaries mentioned are the communities depending on the forests.

The Project Proposal is in line with Objectives “c”, “f” and “g” of the International Tropical Timber Agreement- ITTA 1994, and also takes into consideration the ITTO Yokohama Action Plan in several aspects: it focuses on information to improve sustainable forest management and timber production, and the promotion of cooperation between institutes through networks.

## **2- Evaluation Scope, Focus and Approach**

By definition the ex-post evaluation is a collection of information, based on documents and on-the-spot assessment. It includes an in-depth analysis of the implementation performance and of the impact of the Project after its completion.

The intent of an ex-post evaluation is to establish, after the project completion, how well the Project served its purpose, how effective and efficient was its implementation, and assess aspects related to the Project sustainability and lessons learned that could be applied in future projects design and implementation.

This ex-post evaluation covers Project PD 264/04 Rev03, and was recommended to the International Tropical Timber Council- ITTC by the ITTO Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence at its Forty-third Session, held in Yokohama, Japan from 9 to 14 November 2009.

The Committee recommendation was duly endorsed by the Council, and Ivan Tomaselli, from Brazil, was selected and hired by the ITTO Secretariat, on June 2010, as the consultant responsible for the ex-post evaluation of the Project.

Most relevant documents related to the Project (Project Proposal Document, Agreement, Minutes of the Steering Committee Meetings, Yearly Working Plans, Progress Reports, Outputs, Completion Report and others) were made available to the consultant in July 2010.

The ITTO Terms of Reference for the ex-post evaluation included:

- i) Assess the extent to which the general objective, the specific objectives and the outputs of the project have been achieved;
- ii) Assess the relevance of the project to ITTA, 1994 and the ITTO Yokohama Action Plan,
- iii) Evaluate the impact and relevance of the project and determine to what extent the project has contributed to improving access to interdisciplinary data on timbers of Tropical Africa and networking, leading to enhanced cooperation as well as exchange and dissemination of the data to various targeted beneficiary groups.
- iv) Determine the effectiveness of information dissemination of project outputs and assess the overall post project situation in relation to its impact on the forestry sector in Tropical Africa and other relevant sectors including education, extension, research, industry, policy-making and local communities as well as PROTA and its network.
- v) Define and assess any unexpected event, effect and impact, either harmful or beneficial, and offer explanation for their occurrence.
- vi) Analyze and assess the efficiency of project implementation and management, including technical, financial and managerial aspects.
- vii) Recommend follow-up action, where appropriate, in order to enhance utilization of the results of the project.
- viii) Make an overall assessment of the project's relative success or failure, summarize the key lessons learned; and identify any issues or problems which should be taken into account in the design and implementation of similar projects in future.

Based on the assessment of documents, interviews and critical analysis the consultant was asked to:

- i) Prepare an evaluation report with an executive summary in accordance with the outline provided in the ITTO Manual for Project Monitoring, Review and Evaluation.
- ii) Prepare an article for possible publication in the ITTO Tropical Forest Update (TFU), in consultation with the editor, containing an overview of the project and summarizing the lessons learned from the evaluation work.
- iii) Present the report at the Forty-fourth Session of the ITTO Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence to be held in Yokohama, Japan.

The Project documents were made available to the consultant by ITTO Secretariat in July and were reviewed in August and September. The working program followed the original ITTO Secretariat proposal, and included:

- August / September 2010  
Review of documents, contacts with Implementing Agency and organization of travel.
- 19 September 2010  
Arrival in Wageningen, Netherlands
- 20 September 2010

Meetings with officials of PROTA, the Editorial Coordinator and other available members of the project team for elaboration and finalization of the programme for the assignment, briefing and discussions on project implementation and results and inspection of project site, tangible outputs and financial accounts and statements.

-21 September 2010

Travel to Ghana to hold meetings with the Project Coordinator and other available members of the Project team.

- 22-24 September 2010

Travel to Kumasi and have a meetings and discussions with the Project Coordinator and other members of the Project team. During the visit it was also possible to participate in the second meeting of the Project Steering Committee for PD 479/07 Rev.2 (M) "Timbers of Tropical Africa Part 2: Group 7(2) within the PROTA Programme", a follow-up project to PD 264/04 Rev.3 (M,I), meet members of the Committee and to observe the workshop on wood anatomy, implemented as part of the programme of Part 2 of the Project.

- 25 and 26 September 2010

Travel to Accra, Netherlands and Brazil.

- 15 October 2010

Submission to ITTO and the Executing Agency of the draft report for comments and suggestion.

- 31 October 2010

Submission to ITTO of the final report and the draft article for the TFU.

The presentation of the Report was scheduled for December 14, 2010, at the Forty-fourth Session of the ITTO Committee on Economic Information and Market Intelligence in Yokohama, Japan.

### **3- Project Facts**

The Project was born in PROTA-Plant Resources of Tropical Africa, a foundation with headquarters at Wageningen University, in The Netherlands, and branch offices/representatives in several African countries. It is an initiative similar to PROSEA-Plant Resources of South-East Asia developed for South-East Asian countries, implemented in the 1990s.

Both initiatives take into consideration the fact that there is a large amount of dispersed data on the plant resources, and it is important to organize and make the information accessible to individual users.

The aim of the PROTA Programme as a whole is to document the existing wealth of dispersed information on the plant resources of Tropical Africa, and to make it available for education, extension work, research and industry.

The PROTA working program is subdivided into 16 Commodities Groups, including vegetables, cereals, medicinal plants, fruits and others. Timbers constitute the Commodity Group 7, and in view of the large number of species in this Group the working program was divided into two parts or projects. The Project Proposal for the first part was designed to cover 350 timber species of the more important taxonomic families, out of a total of around 900 timber species.

A Project Proposal for the first part of the timbers group was submitted by the Government of Ghana for the consideration of ITTO in 2004, and it was financed in 2005. The Project Proposal considered PROTA as the Implementing Agency.

The Project Proposal considered that decision-makers, researchers and producers, students and scholars, extension workers and educators in Tropical Africa still depend for an overview of the

utilization of the plants/timber resources on a few botanically oriented and regionally focused handbooks.

Tropical Africa is a vast area with many countries, and contains only a few libraries where current world literature can be consulted. It is therefore needed a modern databank and handbook, providing up-to-date information about the useful plants/ timbers of the continent, both cultivated and growing wild. This was the general aim of the proposed Project.

Timber trees are for the tropical Africa, a major element of the natural vegetation and in a large number of economies, harvesting and processing of timber plays an important socio economic role. Proper management of the forests needs to be encouraged in order to ensure that production of timber and non timber products is sustainable, while the economic and social development is achieved.

The development objective of the proposed project was defined as:

Improve access to interdisciplinary data on the timbers of Tropical Africa as a basis for sustainable tropical forest management, and to improve networking leading to better cooperation and information exchange between forestry actors.

In order to achieve this development objective the following specific objectives were defined for the project:

- i) To gather, evaluate and synthesize the dispersed information on the 'Timbers of Tropical Africa' through improved networking;
- ii) To facilitate wide access of target beneficiaries to the information on the 'Timbers of Tropical Africa' in electronic and printed forms.

The Project proposed to carry out an inventory of available information and a critical compilation of existing knowledge on the 'Timbers of Tropical Africa' in the form of a Webdatabase, Handbook and CD-ROM, to serve as a reference framework for policy-makers, education and extension workers, researchers and industry (the direct beneficiaries), and a rich source for the production of derived materials for communities depending on the forest (the indirect beneficiaries).

The strategy proposed to implement the project considered the PROTA ongoing work with other commodity groups and took into account the existence of experienced staff members in 7 African and 3 European countries and an experienced team of editors from institutions linked to the PROTA programme, in this case especially the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG) and Agropolis, France (CIRAD-Forêt).

The Project Proposal Document points out as the key beneficiaries the major timber-producing countries in Tropical Africa such as Gabon, Cameroon, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ghana, Côte d'Ivoire and Liberia, but also mentioned that other countries in Tropical Africa will benefit.

In these countries the direct beneficiaries of the electronic (Webdatabases, CD-ROMs) and printed output (Books) are those professionally concerned with timbers (in government, research, education, extension and industry). It also pointed out the indirect beneficiaries: communities depending on the forest.

The Project had a planned duration of 3 years. The agreement between the Implementing Agency-PROTA and ITTO was signed in September 2005, and effective implementation started in January 2006. The work was completed within the time schedule planned, in December 2008. The implementation was monitored by a Steering Committee, and three meetings were held over the period.

The total Project budget was US\$1,608,299.00. The ITTO contribution was US\$577,886.00. The other funders were the Dutch Government (US\$403,710.00) and PROTA (US\$626,703.00)

As previously mentioned PROTA-Plant Resources of Tropical Africa located in The Netherlands, was selected to be the Executing Agency and Dr Joseph Cobbinah, from the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana-FORIG, was designated as the Project Co-ordinator.

The other Project key personnel in the team were:

- Dr. Jan Siemonsma (WU) Editorial Coordinator
- Dr. Martin Brink (WU) Internal Editor
- Dr. Dominique Louppe (Agropolis) Editor
- Dr. Andrew Oteng-Amoako (FORIG) Editor
- Dr. Elizabeth Omino Coordinator, Network Office Africa
- Mrs. Stella Britwum Acquah Regional Officer West Africa node

Additionally the Project involved around 60 authors, many of them affiliated to institutions in Africa, which participated in the information collection/ timber synthesis.

The Project Proposal lists as Cooperating Governments the Governments of Ghana, Netherlands, France, Gabon and United Kingdom, but apparently only the two first ones played some role in financing and implementing the Project. In any case of Project involved of several partnership institutions located in a large number of African countries.

The lead institutions in the Project were the Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG), the Wageningen University (WU) and Agropolis International (France).

## **4- Findings and Lessons Learned**

### **4.1- Findings**

#### **- Achievements of the Project**

The development objective established for this Project was achieved. In general the access to interdisciplinary data on timbers of Tropical Africa as a basis for sustainable tropical forest management was improved, and networking was strengthened, leading to a better cooperation and information exchange between forestry actors of the region.

The two specific objectives and the proposed outputs of the Project were also generally achieved.

Under the first specific objective, as an overall, the amount of information collected, evaluated and synthesized surpassed the original target. A small deviation was found in the number of TEXTFILE-TIMBERS: in the Project Proposal Document, under output 1.5, and also in the Logical Framework (see sources of verification), the target established was about 350 state-of-art review articles, and the output achieved 280 "validated" textfile review articles.

The reduction in the number of textfiles was agreed at the First Meeting of the Project Steering Committee held in Accra on October 5, 2006. At that meeting the PSC endorsed the Yearly Plan of Operation for 2007 with an adjustment to the provision under Output 1.5, in which, based on the experience of the first year of implementation of the Project, the

number of review articles was reduced from 350 to 275. In spite of this reduction the number of species covered exceeded the original target.

Outputs related to specific objective 2 of the Project were also, in general, achieved. A Web Database, Handbooks and CDs with information on 511 African Timbers species (English and French) are now available.

PROTA also established agreements with the Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation- CTA and with Blackhuys Publishers for the distribution of the Project outputs.

After the completion of the Project the Web Database located in [www.prota.org](http://www.prota.org) was upgraded, and is now interactive. This will be important to facilitate the implementation of the Part 2 of the Project and also to continuously improve and enlarge the database.

Based on the analysis of the Completion Report of this Project, and also other documents made available for this ex-post evaluation, it is not clear the achievement related to Output 2.4- Derived Products-Timbers. Under this output it was planned: i) a survey of beneficiaries and dialogue with “grassroots” organizations on prioritizing derived products, and, ii) the production of derived products in cooperation with “grassroots” organizations (pilots).

An output derived from the Project was the brainstorm workshop held in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2008. The workshop involved 23 key stakeholders to discuss the findings of the Project and to formulate recommendations to PROTA. The participants were representatives of governments, research organizations, universities and PROTA regional offices. No representative of the private sector or communities participated.

The results of the consultation process are a contribution to the discussion and dissemination of the results, and to increase cooperation among stakeholders. The main findings and recommendations were compiled in a brochure that was made available in 2009, after the completion of the Project, and distributed freely to about 1950 target institutions in Tropical Africa with interest in timbers.

The Project also contributed to the capacity building of experts on wood anatomy. A Wood Anatomy Workshop was hosted by Agropolis International and was held in Montpellier, France, from 16 to 25 May, 2007. This activity involved 14 participants, including 8 trainees and 6 experienced instructors. At the workshop participants were trained and standardized wood-anatomical description was agreed and considered in the preparation of the outputs of the Project.

The Web Data Base, the Handbook and the CD-ROMs (available in two languages- English and French) had a positive impact by facilitating the access of stakeholders to information on tropical timber species in Africa. The information, that was previously dispersed, difficult to identify and not always accessible, is now organized and available. This will facilitate the implementation of sustainable forest management in Africa.

During the Ex-post Evaluation it was not possible to properly assess the utilization of the information made available by the Project by the beneficiaries. Nevertheless it seems that the Project outputs could have had a broader impact.

The dissemination focussed mainly on government and academic groups (universities and research organizations). It was noticed, for instance, that the private sector had a minor role in the implementation of the project, and their access to the information generated by the Project was, in principle, limited.

The private sector is the primary agent responsible for the implementation of forest management, and the information made available by the Project is also relevant to the



industrial operations and to trade. Therefore the private sector should have been more involved in the implementation, as well as should be a priority in terms of having access to the information.

The Project Proposal Document considered having a Representative of ATO in the Steering Committee, but this did not happen. In two meetings of the Steering Committee a representative of GTMO participated, but being an organization of Ghana it seems that it does not have the expected regional impact in the dissemination of the Project information among the private sector of the region.

It also seems that the indirect beneficiaries mentioned in the Project Proposal Document (communities depending on the forests) were, to some extent, marginalised.

The Project Proposal mentions that the information to the indirect beneficiaries would be made available through specially prepared materials, such as brochures and leaflets, by the extension service or through other means, but it seems that these activities were not implemented. The Completion Report mentions that in due time, information will be presented to indirect beneficiaries through specially prepared materials, but there is no evidences that this has happened.

The Project has been continued by a second phase that will cover the remaining 500 timber species of Tropical Africa, and that is expected to be concluded in 2012.

PROTA expects that the capacity building activities of the Project, coupled with the recruitments in the Network Office in Africa, and phased transfer of responsibilities to institutions in Africa would ensure the internalization of the programme and therefore the sustainability of the activities related to the Project.

The Project does not have an extensive list of activities to be implemented after its completion, but there are some that are necessary to be sustainable. Among the activities that will need to be maintained after the Project completion are those related to the "interactive Web Database". The interactive Web Database will expand and update the information, and needs maintenance that is expected to be continued after the completion of the Project.

A preliminary assessment points out that if no concrete actions take place, problems might be faced to ensure the sustainability of the programme. This seems already to be the case of PROSEA in Asia.

#### **- Process of Project formulation and implementation**

In the Project Proposal Document is not clear the involvement of regional stakeholders in the consultation process during the formulation phase of the Project.

Apparently most of the discussions involving the Project design was carried out within PROTA, and took into consideration the experience gained with the implementation of PROSEA in Asia. The structure and activities of PROTA in dealing with the other commodity groups in Africa (medicinal plants, vegetables and others), was also considered.

Negotiations were held, in a later stage, with the Government of Ghana to have the Project Proposal submitted to ITTO for funding. Based on the negotiations the Project was submitted by the Government of Ghana, having PROTA as the Implementing Agency.

The original Project Proposal listed as Implementing Bodies 10 PROTA Offices and the PROSEA Foundation. Ghana, Gabon, The Netherlands, France and United Kingdom are listed as Cooperating Governments, and it is mentioned that a networking that would be established in 47 countries.

The information provided in the documents from the Project made available, including the Minutes of the Steering Committee Meetings, Progress Reports and the Completion Report, shows that the implementing structure was simplified, and the number of organization and countries involved were reduced.

Three organizations are listed in the Completion Report as “leading institutions” involved in the implementation of the Project: FORIG- Ghana; Wageningen University- The Netherlands and Agropolis International- France.

The structure for the implementation of the Project considered a General Coordinator located in Ghana that had a general role of supervising general implementation and report on the project activities to ITTO. An operational coordinator, located in The Netherlands, took care of managing the project implementation covering financial aspects, the procurement of services and other aspects. He was the person responsible for the general management of the Project operations.

The overall implementation was efficient and effective, and this was basically as a result of the established structure and the experience of the team in The Netherlands from similar projects in South East Asia. The efficient internal and external monitoring also played an important role.

The technical, financial and managerial aspects, including the procurement of services, followed internal and ITTO standards and rules, and were properly reported in clear documents that were made available for the ex-post evaluation.

The Project budget was, in principle, sufficient to implement all activities. Small adjustments were made in the budget during the implementation of the Project. The value expended was slightly higher than the original budget for the Project, and the exceeding amount was paid by PROTA.

The location of a General Coordinator in Ghana, of the Implementing Agency in The Netherlands and member of the operational team in other sites/ regions seem not have created major limitations. Efficient communication, together with good planning and operational management minimized the problems.

Some delays were faced involving the implementation of certain activities, and this seems to be related to the amount of documentation and the large number of authors involved. These delays, nevertheless, did not affect the overall implementation of the Project as it was completed within the planned time schedule.

Other small problems were identified during the implementation of the Project, but the team involved in the management were efficient to find and implement alternatives to overcome the limitations within a short time.

The Completion Report mentions that the implementation efficiency could be improved by having a planning workshop at the start of the Project. It recommends that the proposed workshop should involve the key personnel involved in the Project to discuss details related to the role and responsibilities, activities and the implementing schedules. This recommendation was not followed in the implementation of Part 2 of the Project.

#### **- The Project Proposal Appraisal Process**

No major failure was identified in the design of this Project Proposal. The Project Proposal, based on the recommendation of the ITTO Expert Panel responsible for the appraisal of project proposals, was revised three times. This ensured that the required adjustments were made and the quality of the Project Proposal was enhanced.

One of the aspects that could have been considered at the appraisal phase was the large number of agencies/organizations/ offices proposed to be involved in the implementation of the Project.

In general to have a large number of organizations involved create constraints in the implementation of a Project. Apparently this was noticed during the implementation, but adjustments were made in time to avoid problems.

#### **4.2- Lessons Learned**

The most relevant lessons learned from the implementation of this Project can be summarized as:

- i. Accumulated experience and a well established structure of the Implementing Agency is important for a proper formulation of a Project Proposal, and specially in the implementation of the Project activities;
- ii. A well established management structure for the Project allows that operational problems, which frequently happen during the implementation of a complex Project such as this, are quickly identified. In the implementation of this Project, immediate and proper actions were adopted to overcome problems, and this facilitated the implementation and the proposed objectives were fully achieved;
- iii. Efficient communication and good cooperation is important in the implementation of projects that involve several persons/organizations working in different sites / regions. This is also important in Projects manipulating a large quantity of materials/ documents;
- iv. The involvement of a large number of organization/ offices/ collaborators tends to create constraints in the implementation of a Project. It seems to be better to concentrate the cooperation within a limited number of selected/ key organizations. This seems to be the strategy that was, at the end, adopted in the implementation of this Project.

### **5- Conclusions and Recommendations**

#### **5.1- Conclusions**

The main conclusions of the ex-post evaluation of this Project are:

- i. This Project was well designed and efficiently implemented. The established objectives were achieved, and the outputs were delivered within the time schedule proposed in the Project Proposal Document. Accumulated experience of the team involved and a well established management structure at the Implementing Agency was important to facilitate the implementation of the Project.
- ii. The value of implementing this regional and inter-continental Project needs to be recognized. Its implementation involved several Anglo Franco countries in Africa and several authors, and had an interaction with PROTA offices and other organizations in Europe. This was a challenge to the Implementing Agency, that was able to carry out the activities efficiently, effectively and on time, with no extension in the Project duration and additional financing;
- iii. The Project was in line with ITTA-2004 Objectives and with ITTO Yokohama Work Plan, and outputs will contribute to improve the implementation of sustainable forest management in Africa, facilitate the education of younger generation and increase the cooperation among regional stakeholders;

- iv. The work continued after the completion of the Project, and activities were implemented to improve the dissemination of the outputs;
- v. One example of activity implemented after the completion of the Project was the Web Database upgraded, that is now interactive. Besides the possibility of a continuous update of the information the interactive Web Database will facilitate the implementation of the Part 2 of the Project;
- vi. One of the problems identified was the limited involvement of the private sector and communities groups, listed as direct and indirect beneficiaries of the Project. It seems that the private sector had a minor role and only participated in some meetings of the Steering Committee. No reference was made to the involvement of the communities;
- vii. In the dissemination of the Project outputs the focus was mainly on governments and academic groups (universities and research organizations), with less attention to the private sector, the main responsible for the implementation of sustainable forest management. It also seems also that the communities were neglected. The creation of special materials mentioned in the Project Proposal, such as brochures and leaflets, and the development of activities to reach the communities, such as extension services or through other means, was not implemented;
- viii. It was noticed that all the 23 key stakeholders that participated in the brainstorm workshop held in Kumasi, Ghana, in November 2008, to discuss the findings of the Project and to formulate recommendations to PROTA, were representatives of governments, research organizations, universities and PROTA regional offices. No representative of the private sector or communities participated;
- ix. The Project has continued and the implementation of a second phase, covering the remaining 500 timber species of Tropical Africa, is expected to be concluded in 2012. PROTA expects that the capacity building activities of the Project, coupled with the recruitments in the Network Office in Africa, and phased transfer of responsibilities to institutions in Africa would ensure the internalization of the programme in Africa, and the sustainability of the activities related to the Project. Apparently so far this has been only partially achieved. Activities related and generated from the "interactive Web Database" will need to be implemented after the completion of the second phase of the Project. A preliminary assessment points out that problems might be faced to ensure the sustainability of the programme. This already seems to be the case of PROSEA.

## **5.2- Recommendations**

As previously mentioned the Project was carefully implemented and the objectives proposed were in general achieved. Some recommendations can be made to improve the ongoing implementation of phase 2 of this Project, as well as the implementation of other projects.

The main recommendations from this ex post evaluation are:

- i. In spite of the fact that the second phase of this project is already in implementation, it is recommended to examine the possibility to consider having a stronger involvement of the private sector. Also, if still possible, improvements should be introduced in the dissemination of information to communities, the secondary beneficiaries;
- ii. The assessment made points out that, the dissemination of the Project outputs can be improved. Stakeholders need to be better informed and educated on the use and benefits of information available in the Web Page, printed material and CD-ROM. Mechanisms to improve dissemination should be identified and implemented before the completion of the second phase of this Project. The mechanisms could include the preparation of promotion

material for specific stakeholders, implementation of seminars and workshops, participation in conferences and other specific activities;

- iii. More efforts are needed to ensure the sustainability of the Project. The Project has implemented activities involving capacity building but this seems not to be sufficient. It is recommended to identify effective actions to be implemented during the remaining two years of work of phase 2 to facilitate the achievement of the sustainability of the Project.

The strengthening of an African organization and the establishment of a Regional Network, together with a phased transfer of responsibilities seems to be good options to internalize the programme in Africa and ensure its sustainability.