

African principles, criteria and indicators agreed

A new set of principles, criteria and indicators coupled with a substantial and innovative training program will boost efforts to sustainably manage Africa's tropical forests

THE African Timber Organization (ATO), in collaboration with ITTO, recently published the *ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests*. This 26-page document provides wide-ranging guidance at the national and forest-management-unit (FMU) levels for good practice in Africa's moist tropical forests.

Towards the end of the 1990s, the ATO set out to develop a set of principles, criteria and indicators (PCI) to promote the sustainable management of African forests, aided by financial assistance from the European Union and technical collaboration with the Center for International Forestry Research. In the meantime, ITTO was revising and updating its original (1992) set of criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of natural tropical forests (C&I), publishing a new set in 1998. Thus, African member countries of ATO and ITTO found themselves with two sets of C&I; it made sense to build on these sets to develop a unique and harmonised set applicable to African tropical forests.

Decision 4(xxix), adopted during the 29th Session of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) held in Yokohama, Japan in November 2000, called for collaboration between ATO and ITTO in order to refine the ATO PCI and make them consistent with the ITTO C&I. This work was helped by two international consultants, who examined both sets and combined the strengths of each in a draft of harmonised PCI for African tropical forests. During a regional ATO/ITTO workshop in Yaoundé, Cameroon, held just prior to the 30th Session of the ITTC at the same venue, the draft was finalised as the *ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests*.

This document, which has been published in French and English, comprises 1 principle, 5 criteria, 33 indicators and 44 sub-indicators at the national level, and 3 principles, 15 criteria, 56 indicators and 140 sub-indicators at the FMU level. An innovative feature of the ATO/ITTO PCI is the inclusion of sub-indicators, which provide a basis for the development of specific verifiers and standards of performance relevant to the assessment of sustainable forest



Training: a group of foresters (bottom left) receive training in the *ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests* in a Congolese logging concession. Photo: J. Blaser

management at the FMU level in African tropical forests. The box (below) shows two examples of the principle/criterion/indicator/sub-indicator hierarchy.

ATO and ITTO, in collaboration with other partners, are assisting their members to put the ATO/ITTO PCI into practice. Their efforts will be supported by a project recently funded by ITTO for execution by ATO; it aims to train at least 60 forestry staff in each African ITTO member country in the implementation of the ATO/ITTO PCI. It is also developing an auditing framework for African forests and training at least 60 trainers in the procedures for conducting audits based on the PCI at the FMU level (see *TFU* 12/3, p 21 for a summary).

Copies of the ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests can be obtained from the ITTO information officer (see contact details on page 2) or at www.itto.or.jp

Examples from the *ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests*



PRINCIPLE 3: The main ecological functions of the forest are maintained.

- ▶ **Criterion 3.3:** The impact of harvesting activities on biodiversity is minimized.
- ▶ **Indicator 3.3.3:** The diversity and relative abundance of fauna species do not change significantly.
 - ▶ **Sub-indicator 3.3.3.2:** There is an internal rule forbidding and also penalizing the transportation and trade of bush meat, and also the transport of guns and weapons for hunting in the vehicles of the forest concessionaire.

PRINCIPLE 4: According to the importance and intensity of forest operations, the FMU manager contributes to the improvement of the economic and social well-being of workers in the FMU and of local populations.

- ▶ **Criterion 4.3:** All stakeholders consider the share of benefits derived from forests to be satisfactory.
- ▶ **Indicator 4.3.3:** In accordance with the importance and impact of the forest operations at the local level, the concessionaire contributes to the development of the local economy.
 - ▶ **Sub-indicator 4.3.3.1:** The concessionaire encourages the creation of small and medium-sized enterprises related to its forestry activities.