

Fellowship report

An ITTO fellowship allowed the author to attend a training course on forest management planning in Paris, France

by Reine Félicité Eteta'a Edzimba, épouse BETI

Senior technician for water and forests (Technicienne supérieure des Eaux et Forêts)

National Office of Forest Development (Office National de Développement des Forêts) (ONADEF)

Yaounde, Cameroon



Carrying the can: ITTO fellow Reine Félicité Eteta'a Edzimba tends a community nursery in Cameroon.

THE tropical forests are under immense pressure from a wide range of destructive forces. One of these is intensive logging when it is conducted without due regard to the rules of sustainable forest management. It is therefore necessary to find strategies for improving the tropical timber resource base that can lead to the preservation and sustainability of our tropical forests.

In Cameroon and elsewhere in West Africa, the logging industry can be highly profitable (particularly in the first cut), but it is often carried out in a disorderly fashion. Misdemeanours by the various parties (which include approved forestry developers, non-approved foresters—illegal operators—and village populations living near the forests) range from the disregard of forest regulations to the pure and simple pillage of the forests.

The timber collected is intended for the forest industry (logs and timber), sale to private individuals and in

timber markets, and utilisation according to users' rights (structural timber, firewood). In order to avoid the total desolation of the forests we need to systematically regulate and uphold the standards of forestry development. To that effect, a number of measures must be taken to ensure sustainable forest management. In this article I outline a proper approach to forest management that ONADEF and other agencies are striving to achieve.

Forest analysis and knowledge of the resource

To ensure that our forests are managed sustainably it is essential to develop a sustainable forest management plan for each forest management unit (FMU). This should contain some basic features.

First, it should include a detailed description of the natural and socioeconomic contexts in which the forest must be managed. Generally speaking, this includes the climatic and topographic characteristics of the forest land, such as rainfall (average annual or monthly), temperatures and sunshine; the terrain type and conditions; topography; other vegetation and non-forest areas; and so on. As regards the socioeconomic environment, the aim is to take into account both the timber potential of the forest to be managed and the 'society-forest' relationship, and to integrate the concerns of all the stakeholders; this should allow the logging concessionaire to establish itself without clashes or conflicts. In other words, it is necessary to study the living conditions, users' activities and rights of the local populations, to investigate the prospects for employment of the villagers and young graduates, to develop local training programs to assist villagers in

Fellowships awarded

Twenty-eight fellowships worth a total of US\$150 000 were awarded at the 34th session of the International Tropical Timber Council in May 2003. Awardees were:

Mr Jorge Luis Medina (Bolivia); **Mr Nsorfon Innocent Forba** (Cameroon); **Mr Francis Emmanuel Ngome** (Cameroon); **Mr Marcelin Tonye Mahop** (Cameroon); **Ms Wynet Vera Smith** (Canada); **Ms Sandra María Leiva Bustillo** (Colombia); **Ms Sandra Eliana and Ms Candela Restrepo** (Colombia); **Ms Llinet Marcela Serna González** (Colombia); **Mr Alain Noël Ampolo** (Congo); **Mr Jean-Paul Obame Engone** (Gabon); **Mr Samuel Nsiah** (Ghana); **Mr Eric Donkor Marfo** (Ghana); **Mrs Edith Abbruchah** (Ghana); **Ms Lina Karlinasari** (Indonesia); **Mr Teguh Rahardja** (Indonesia); **Dr Untung Iskandar** (Indonesia); **Ms Made Hestilestari Tata** (Indonesia); **Dr Hin Fui Lim** (Malaysia); **Mr Balram Dhakal** (Nepal); **Mr Ashok Kumar Mallik** (Nepal); **Mr Thakur Silwal** (Nepal); **Mr Israel Fufuse Bewang** (Papua New Guinea); **Ms Carolina de La Rosa Tincopa** (Peru); **Ms Elsa Sara Arias Ninán** (Peru); **Ms Irma Icatlo Palanginan** (Philippines); **Ms María Eugenia Benitez Torres** (Venezuela); **Mr Edgar Alexander Trejo Avila** (Venezuela); **Mr Yoston Jaime Contreras Miranda** (Venezuela).

finding employment in the forestry operation, and to determine possible sources of conflicts between the population and any eventual logging concessionaire.

It is also important to determine the standard of living of the populations and to carry out a survey of the state infrastructures from which they benefit. The management plan should specify the local population's rights in the use of the forest resources.

Collecting and documenting the best possible information is essential to the management decision-making process. Existing mapping, satellite and radar images, and aerial photographs should be used to stratify the forest in preparation for detailed forest resource inventories. General management inventories should quantify those forest resources, including but not limited to timber resources, that would be available for immediate harvest, as well as the resources that would become available in the medium term. The results of inventories should then be translated into a report including maps and tables containing the available information.

Forest productivity after the first harvest should not be overlooked. Growth-and-yield data, where available, should be used to assess the forest's potential sustainable yield. If such data are not available, permanent sampling plots should be established.

Planning for harvesting

Generally, the management plan will span between 20 and 40 years, with reviews usually every five years. Normally, it will specify the main management parameters, such as rotation, period of validity, allowable cut, minimal diameter, etc, in the FMU. Silvicultural operations such as thinning and other improvements must also be described.

Production inventory

The production working circle is that part of the FMU that is to be harvested. Pre-harvest inventories must measure all individual trees of valuable timber species with a diameter greater than 20 cm. Moreover, the number, usable

volumes and crop stems of all other marketable individuals must be measured. Those trees to be harvested should be plotted on a map and marked in the field.

Training, monitoring and control

The implementation of the management plan must be closely monitored; the requirements for monitoring and control should be specified in the management plan. The training needs of all categories of staff should also be specified.

Conclusion

By the end of my training, and also through my own study, I can humbly claim to have improved my knowledge of forest management. I have acquired greater experience and valuable knowledge, which will have to be preserved and developed wherever it will be needed within my profession. Indeed, these lessons can already be put to practical use in my professional life, especially during the field meetings that our services organise regularly for the populations, either at the beginning of each logging operation, or to settle disputes between operators and residents.

Translated from the French by Yvonne Cunningham.

Editor's note: the ATO/ITTO principles, criteria and indicators for the sustainable management of African natural tropical forests (see TFCU 13/1, page 19) provide further guidance on the ingredients for an effective forest management plan in African tropical forests. For a copy, please contact the ITTO Information Officer (address on page 2), or downloaded at www.itto.or.jp/policy/principle/

ITTO Fellowships offered

ITTO offers fellowships through the Freezailah Fellowship Fund to promote human resource development and to strengthen professional expertise in member countries in tropical forestry and related disciplines. The goal is to promote the sustainable management of tropical forests, the efficient use and processing of tropical timber, and better economic information about the international trade in tropical timber.

Eligible activities include:

- participation in short-term training courses, training internships, study tours, lecture/demonstration tours and international/regional conferences;
- technical document preparation, publication and dissemination, such as manuals and monographs; and
- post-graduate studies.

Priority areas: eligible activities aim to develop human resources and professional expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- improving the transparency of the tropical timber market;
- improving the marketing and distribution of tropical timber species from sustainably managed sources;

- improving market access for tropical timber exports from sustainably managed sources;
- securing the tropical timber resource base;
- improving the tropical timber resource base, including through the application of criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management;
- enhancing technical, financial and human capacities to manage the tropical timber resource base;
- promoting increased and further processing of tropical timber from sustainably managed sources;
- improving the marketing and standardisation of tropical timber exports; and
- improving the efficiency of tropical timber processing.

In any of the above, the following are relevant:

- enhancing public relations, awareness and education;
- improving statistics;
- research and development; and
- sharing information, knowledge and technology.

Selection criteria: Fellowship applications will be assessed against the following selection criteria (in no priority order):

- consistency of the proposed activity with the Program's objective and priority areas;
- qualifications of the applicant to undertake the proposed fellowship activity;
- the potential of the skills and knowledge acquired or advanced under the fellowship activity to lead to wider applications and benefits nationally and internationally; and
- reasonableness of costs in relation to the proposed fellowship activity.

The maximum amount for a fellowship grant is US\$10 000. Only nationals of ITTO member countries are eligible to apply. The next deadline for applications is **4 September 2003** for activities that will begin no sooner than 1 December 2003. Applications are appraised in May and November each year.

Further details and application forms (in English, French or Spanish) are available from Dr Chisato Aoki, Fellowship Program, ITTO; Fax 81-45-223 1111; fellowship@itto.or.jp (see page 2 for ITTO's postal address).