



INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

ITTC(LI)/13
14 August 2015

ENGLISH ONLY

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION
16-21 November 2015
Kuala Lumpur

PROGRESS REPORT ON THE ITTO FELLOWSHIP PROGRAMME (FREEZAILAH FELLOWSHIP FUND) (Item 19 of the Provisional Agenda)

Introduction

1. This document is prepared pursuant to Decision 4(XXVII), which requested the Executive Director to prepare progress reports on the implementation of the ITTO Fellowship Programme for Council's review during its regular Sessions.
2. In keeping with this Decision, this document reports on the work related to the implementation of the ITTO Fellowship Programme since the end of the Fifty Session of the ITTC and outlines measures to be considered at the Fifty-first Session regarding the operation of the Freezailah Fellowship Fund.

Progress in Implementation

3. Advertisement and Dissemination of the ITTO Fellowship Programme

The Secretariat continues to advertise the ITTO Fellowship Programme in the Tropical Update (TFU), the Tropical Timber Market Information and on the ITTO website <http://www.itto.int/>. The latest TFU Volume 24 Number 1 published excerpts of an ITTO Fellowship report on how the FLEGT VPA process is helping strengthen forest governance in Honduras.

4. The ITTO Fellowship Network website based on the social network platform was implemented at <http://www.ittofellownet.org/> in June 2014. It aims to: (1) promote the sharing of knowledge and information among ITTO Fellows and alumni on the sustainable management and use of tropical forests and forest resources and other related issues; (2) provide a forum for collaborative work among ITTO Fellows and alumni, and (3) provide a platform for pursuing common interests, such as career development opportunities and networking. The network will serve to provide up-to-date information on alumni activities and events worldwide. More than 550 fellows have already registered by the end of July 2015, and have been actively exchanging knowledge and experiences. More fellows are expected to join the network.
5. Status of Fellowship Awards

The Fellowship Programme, which began in 1989, has enabled 1324 young and mid-career people from 49 countries working for governments, universities, research institutions, NGOs and the private sector to pursue their professional development and improve their career prospects. Twenty Seven percent of the fellowships have been awarded to people from Asia-Pacific, 36% to people from Africa, 27% to people from Latin America/Caribbean, and 10% to people from consumer countries, who carried out their activities in producer member countries. Seventy nine percent of the fellowships awarded were in the field of Reforestation and Forest Management, 14% in Forest Industry and 7% in Economics, Statistics and Markets.

The Programme mainly supports short-term activities, such as short training courses and internships (29%), participation in international conferences and workshops (13%), and study and demonstration tours (3%). In addition, it also helps people to prepare manuals and monographs (10%), and provides small grants for post-graduate study (45%). The Programme encourages capacity development of women foresters, and has supported 396 women to undertake fellowship activities,

accounting for 30% of the total number of fellowships. In fact, half of the fellowships were awarded to women at the 2015 Spring Cycle of the Fellowship Programme. Eighty-four percent of the fellowships have already been completed, while 11% are still operational and 4% terminated for unavoidable reasons.

Funding

6. The total funds for the Fellowship Programme to date amount to approximately US\$9.7 million. Funding has been provided through the generous voluntary contributions from Japan (73%), U.S.A. (16%), the Netherlands (7%), Australia (3%) and others (1%) including Sweden, U.K., Bali Partnership Fund Sub-Account (b) and the private sector.
7. Recalling Decision 4(XXVII) which sets a maximum amount of US\$300,000 per year for fellowship awards, until such time that appreciable increases in funding become available, Council may wish to approve additional funds to cover awards, programme support, and other costs including Fellowship Network for 2016. The Secretariat estimates that to maintain the Programme at the current level of 50-60 awards per year, an amount of US\$400,000 would be needed in 2016.

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