

Responsibilities of Officers of the International Tropical Timber Council

1. Purpose and Background

1.1 Purpose of this document

This document describes the responsibilities of individuals who have been elected to serve as officers of the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC). Although some of the responsibilities of officers may be well understood—such as managing meetings—other responsibilities, such as the role of officers in appeals regarding staff discipline, are not routine and may not be widely recognized. Therefore, this document is designed to inform and help prepare individuals who are considering a position or have been elected as an officer of ITTC.

1.2 Background

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization promoting the conservation and sustainable management, use and trade of tropical forest resources. The ITTO was established by the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA); the most recent ITTA was concluded in 2006 and entered into force in 2011. Governments join the ITTO in one of two categories of membership: Producer members and Consumer members. As set out in the ITTA, 2006, the governing body of the ITTO is the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), which is composed of all the Organization's members.

The ITTC is supported by four standing committees, which provide advice and assistance to the Council on administrative, policy and project issues. The work of the Council and each of the committees is guided by two officers, a Chair and a Vice-chair, each of whom is nominated by one of the two Member Groups and approved by members as a whole. The offices of Chair and Vice-chair of the Council and the offices of Chair and Vice-chair of each of the committees alternate between the categories of members.¹ In the temporary absence of the Chair of the Council or of one of the committees, the respective Vice-chair of that body is asked to assume the responsibilities of the Chair.

The Chair and Vice-chair of the Council are elected by the Council, typically at the end of the annual Council session, for a term of office that begins on January 1 of the following year.² The committees meet during Council sessions, as a rule, and elect their respective chairs and vice-chairs and report the results to the Council. Committee officers also serve for an annual term that begins on January 1 of the following year. It is common practice, although not required,

¹ ITTA, 2006; article 8.3.

² ITTA, 2006; article 8.1.

that Vice-chairs of the Council and of each of the committees are nominated and elected to serve as the Chair in the following year.

Individuals serving as Officers of the ITTC must be accredited members of the delegation of an ITTO Member. However, individuals serve as officers in an individual capacity; that is, they do not represent either their government or their government's category of membership. Instead, in their capacity as Officers of the ITTC they are expected to understand and to represent the interests of the Organization as a whole. The expenses and salaries of Members serving as Officers of the ITTC are not paid by the Organization.³

All Officers of the ITTC are expected to be familiar with the key reference documents that guide the work of the Council, Committees and Secretariat of the ITTO. These documents include:

- International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006 (available at <http://www.itto.int/itta/>)
- ITTO Rules of Procedure (2012) (available at http://www.itto.int/rules_procedure/)
- ITTO Staff Regulations and Rules (2016) (Upon request from the Secretariat)
- ITTO Financial Rules and Rules Related to Projects (2016) (available at http://www.itto.int/financial_rules/)
- Terms of reference for the Committees (see annex 1 of this document)

In addition, as background, all officers are encouraged to review, at a minimum, the report of the previous Council meeting (which includes reports of all Committees). Reports of all previous Council meetings are available at: http://www.itto.int/council_reports/.

1.3 Officers of the ITTC

The officers of the ITTC are:

- Chair and Vice-chair of the Council
- Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration
- Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management
- Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets
- Chair and Vice-chair of the Committee on Forest Industry

³ See ITTA, 2006, article 8.1 and article 19.3.

2. Responsibilities Related to Council and Committee meetings

2.1 Council Chair and Vice-chair

The **Council Chair** is responsible for managing all aspects of the Council meeting. This includes consultations with the Secretariat prior to the Council meeting to compose the agenda and make preliminary decisions on the organization of the meeting and initial allocation of time to Council, Committees and other events that take place during the Council session.

Prior to the Council meeting the **Council Chair** convenes the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) whose purpose is to advise the Chair on all aspects of the Council session.⁴ Members of the IAG include the **Chair and Vice-chair of the Council**, the four **Committee Chairs**, the Spokespersons, a representative of the host country of ITTO Headquarters, a representative of the host country when Council is held outside Headquarters, and the Executive Director. During the Council meeting, the **Council Chair** convenes daily meetings of a Chairperson's Bureau, composed of the members of the IAG plus the vice-chairs of the four Committees. The Chairperson's Bureau assesses daily progress in the work of the Council and Committees and advises the Chair on the conduct of the Council meeting.

In the course of the Council meeting the **Council Chair** also:

- convenes a meeting of donors to coordinate the allocation of voluntary contributions to the organization's project and policy activities;
- convenes ad-hoc meetings as needed to advance items under debate by the Council; and
- convenes an open-ended meeting to prepare final drafts of decisions for consideration by the Council.

The **Council Vice-chair** participates in all meetings of the Council. In the temporary absence of the Council Chair, the Vice-chair is asked to assume the functions of the Chair. The Council Chair may also ask the Vice-chair to convene ad-hoc meetings among members to address specific issues on the Council's agenda.

In the course of the Council meeting the **Council Vice-chair** also:

- participates in the meeting of the IAG;
- serves on the Chairperson's Bureau; and
- convenes a panel of members who review applications and advise the Council on the award of ITTO Fellowships.

2.2 Committee chairs and vice-chairs

⁴ See Decision 2(LI) (2015) available at: <http://www.itto.int/decisions/>.

For each of the committees, the **Committee Chair** is responsible for presiding over meetings of the committee and consulting with members and the Secretariat to ensure the work of the committee is both effective and efficient. The **Committee Chair and Vice-chair** are expected to be familiar with the terms of reference for their Committee (see annex 1). The **Committee Chair** is responsible for managing the work of the Committee to achieve the objectives within the time allocated by the Council Chair. Committee chairs also participate in the meeting of the IAG and serve on the Chairperson's Bureau.

Committee Chairs, assisted by the ITTO Secretariat, are required to prepare a written report of the Committee's work prior to the end of the Council session. The Committee Chair typically requests the assistance of the **Committee Vice-chair** in drafting and reviewing this report. The **Committee Chair** is asked to present a summary of the report of the committee to the Council.

During the Council session, the **Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration** also convenes a meeting of the Panel on Sub-account B of the Bali Partnership Fund.

2.3 Spokespersons

Spokespersons for the two member groups (Producer Members and Consumer Members) are not officers but nevertheless play an important role in the smooth functioning of the Organization, both during and between Council meetings. The Spokespersons are selected by members of each of the groups and are responsible for coordinating the work and consultations of the group and, as necessary, representing the group's views or interests to the Council. The term of office for the spokesperson is decided by the member group.

The primary responsibility of the Spokespersons is to convene meetings of the Member Group during Council sessions in order to facilitate the Member Group's consideration of items on the Council agenda. The Spokespersons' participation in meetings of the IAG and the Chairperson's Bureau is designed to further this communication and coordination.

Specific responsibilities of the Spokespersons include:

- coordinating the Member Group's nominations (including officers, experts to serve on technical panels, and members of the group who are to be designated to participate in various ad-hoc and formal groups convened by the Council);
- facilitating discussions within the Member Group on issues before the Council; and
- as necessary, communicating the views of the Member Group to the Council.

The contribution of the Spokespersons is especially important during the Council session, but the responsibilities of the Spokespersons also include facilitating communication with and among members of the group between Council sessions.

3. Responsibilities related to ITTO governance

In addition to their roles in managing the work of the Council and Committees, Officers of the ITTC may be required to participate directly in oversight of the management of the Organization. These responsibilities may include: serving on a panel to consider a staff member's appeal against a disciplinary measure imposed by the Executive Director; ensuring effective implementation of ITTO's Whistleblower Policy; and participating in mechanisms to provide financial oversight.

3.1 Appeals against disciplinary actions

The ITTO Staff Regulations and Rules describe, among other regulations and rules, procedures through which the Executive Director can impose disciplinary measures on staff members who fail to comply with obligations under the Staff Regulations and Rules, Financial Rules, ITTA or any other administrative issuances. These disciplinary measures can be used whether the failure to comply is intentional or through negligence.⁵

As described in the Staff Regulations and Rules, the Executive Director is required to establish a Joint Disciplinary Committee to advise him in disciplinary cases. Rule 805 of the regulations and rules provides a staff member who is subject to disciplinary action the opportunity to appeal the Executive Director's decision to the **Council Chair**.

In the event of an appeal of a disciplinary measure by a staff member, the **Council Chair** is required to refer the appeal to a five-member panel composed of himself/herself, the **Council Vice-chair and the Chairs of three of the Committees. Committee Chairs** participating in the review of the appeal are chosen jointly by the **Council Chair and Vice-chair**. The appeal panel is required to take a decision within thirty days, and the decision of the panel is final.

3.2 Whistleblower reports and retaliation

The ITTO Whistleblower Policy is designed to ensure that ITTO functions in an open, transparent, ethical and equitable manner, with the objective of enhancing protection for staff members who report misconduct or cooperate with duly authorized investigations. The ITTO Whistleblower Policy is contained in Annex 1 of the ITTO Staff Regulations and Rules (Third Edition).

⁵ See ITTO Staff Regulations and Rules, Third Edition (adopted by Decision 3(LII)), chapter 8.

ITTC Officers are required to make several contributions in the effective implementation of the Whistleblower Policy. These include: receiving and reviewing reports of possible misconduct from individuals unable or unwilling to make a report to the Executive Director; and receiving and reviewing complaints of retaliation or threats of retaliation.

3.2.1 Whistleblower Reports of Misconduct

As a general practice, reports of misconduct are expected to be made through the established internal mechanisms of ITTO. However, in some circumstances—such as the possibility of retaliation, or failure to act on a previous report—the use of internal mechanisms may not be possible. In these circumstances individuals are encouraged to report possible misconduct to one of the following Council Officers: the **Council Chair, Council Vice-chair, or the Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration**.⁶ To facilitate this process, current contact information for Council Officers is maintained and posted in a place accessible to all ITTO staff members. Council Officers receiving a report of misconduct are required to protect the identity of the person making the report, to the maximum extent possible.

3.2.2 Whistleblower Reports of Retaliation

Individuals who believe that retaliatory action has been taken or may be taken against them because they have reported misconduct or cooperated in a duly authorized investigation are encouraged to forward all information and documentation substantiating their complaint to the **Council Chair, Council Vice-chair, or the Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration**.⁷ The Council Officer to whom the initial report is made is asked to serve as the principal point of contact for the duration of the process.

The three **Council Officers** are expected to act collaboratively and are required to keep a confidential record of all complaints received. The **Council Officers** are responsible for conducting a preliminary review to determine if (i) the complainant engaged in a protected activity; and (ii) there is a prima facie case that the protected activity was a factor in causing the alleged retaliation or threat of retaliation. The **Council Officers** are expected to complete their review within 45 days of receiving a complaint.

If the **Council Officers** find that there is a credible case of retaliation or the threat of retaliation, they are to notify the Executive Director, in writing, for further action. If, however, the Executive Director cannot or will not act impartially, the case is referred to the **Council Chair and Vice-chair**. Throughout the process, the **Council Officers** are expected to recommend measures to safeguard the interest of the complainant.

⁶ ITTO Whistleblower Policy, section 5.3.

⁷ ITTO Whistleblower Policy, sections 6.1 through 6.10.

At the conclusion of the process, the **Council Officers** will notify the complainant in writing regarding the outcome of the investigation and make recommendations on the case to the Executive Director. If the review concludes that there is no credible case of retaliation or threat of retaliation, the **Council Officers** may recommend informal mechanisms of conflict resolution to address interpersonal problems.⁸

3.3 Financial Oversight

At its 52nd meeting (2016), the Council adopted a number of measures designed to strengthen the Council's oversight of the Organization's finances. Effective implementation of this enhanced oversight includes additional responsibilities for **Council Officers**, including the responsibility to review financial reports between Council sessions.

Among other measures for enhanced financial oversight, the ITTO Investment Policy⁹ establishes an Investment Oversight Panel (IOP). The IOP functions as a monitoring body and an advisory panel, reporting to the Council. Guided by the **Chair**, the **Committee on Finance and Administration** is responsible for reviewing the work of the IOP and making recommendations to the Council.

The **Council Chair and Vice-chair** are required to designate two expert members of the IOP. As a matter of routine, the IOP is expected to meet quarterly and more frequently, if required.¹⁰ The IOP reports to the **Chair of the Committee on Finance and Administration** and the **IAG** through the **Council Chair**.

⁸ ITTO Whistleblower policy, section 7.1.

⁹ The ITTO Investment Policy is Annex 2 of the Financial Rules and Rules Relating to Projects of the International Tropical Timber Organization (Second Edition, 2016), adopted by Decision 4(LII).

¹⁰ The charter of the ITTO Investment Oversight Panel, including reporting requirements, is Annex 3 of the Financial Rules and Rules Relating to Projects of the International Tropical Timber Organization (Second Edition, 2016), adopted by Decision 4(LII).

Annex 1: FUNCTIONS OF THE COMMITTEES¹¹

A. Functions Common to the Committees

1. Advise and make recommendations to the Council on respective policy matters, including identifying new and emerging issues [pursuant to Article 1 (s) of the ITTA, 2006] and opportunities for cooperation with international and regional organizations, processes and initiatives.
2. Advise and make recommendations to the Council jointly on cross-cutting matters, for example those related to:
 - a) The role of forests in contributing to sustainable development and poverty alleviation;
 - b) Strategies for achieving exports of tropical timber from sustainably managed resources;
 - c) Strengthening the capacity of Members to improve forest law enforcement and governance and to address illegal logging and related trade in tropical timber; and
 - d) The contribution of non-timber forest products and environmental services to sustainable management of tropical forests.
3. Share information on voluntary mechanisms for promoting sustainable tropical forest management; and
4. Provide efficient mechanisms for Members to:
 - a) Approve pre-project and project proposals; and
 - b) Review appeals arising in connection with the review of project proposals by the Expert Panel on the Technical Appraisal of Projects and Pre-Projects.
5. Ensure effective design, monitoring and evaluation of pre-projects and projects, including through ex-post evaluations of completed projects and reports, with a focus on lessons learned.
6. Review projects with implementation problems, in particular, those requiring additional funding.
7. Review reports of ITTO diagnostic missions presented to Council, with a view to advising Council on follow up actions needed.
8. Encourage contributions of the Civil Society Advisory Group and Trade Advisory Group in the Committees' policy agendas in order to broaden the information base on stakeholder views.
9. Review progress and constraints in implementing the ITTO Action Plan.
10. Advise on the development of effective mechanisms for the provision of new and additional financial resources from all sources.

B. Functions of the Committee on Forest Industry

1. Promote increased and further processing of tropical timber from sustainable sources in producer member countries, including by small and

¹¹ Annex to Decision 5(XLVIII) with the exception of Functions of the Committee on Finance and Administration (see note 12).

- medium sized forest enterprises.
2. Promote and support research and development, and share information and experiences related to forest industries, including cooperation among members, with particular emphasis on:
 - a) Developments in further processing and new product technologies relevant to tropical timber and non-timber forest products;
 - b) Employment, human resources development and training;
 - c) Investment and joint ventures, including enabling environments;
 - d) Use of lesser known and lesser used species;
 - e) Harmonization of nomenclature and specifications of processed products;
 - f) Improving knowledge and development of codes and standards;
 - g) Use of efficient wood processing and utilization technologies to improve economic output, reduce waste and enhance recycling;
 - h) Diversification in utilization of wood; and
 - i) Fostering competitiveness of forest products from sustainably managed tropical forests.
 3. Review research and development needs to improve wood utilization and the competitiveness of the tropical wood products industry relative to other products.
 4. Make recommendations to Council on the above matters, as appropriate.

C. Functions of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets

1. Review structural conditions in international timber markets, emphasizing markets for tropical timber, including:
 - a) Factors affecting market access;
 - b) Current situation and short-term prospects;
 - c) Consumer preferences; and
 - d) Conditions leading to prices reflecting costs of sustainable forest management.
2. Make recommendations to the Council on the need for, and nature of, studies contributing to market transparency and understanding of market conditions and economic issues associated with tropical timber, including studies on:
 - a) Prices and market adjustments to changes in prices;
 - b) Factors affecting competitiveness and substitution;
 - c) Marketing and distribution of tropical timber and timber products, including new products;
 - d) Market trends, including information on species and trade-related data; and
 - e) Long-term trends in consumption and production.
3. Identify ways to improve marketing and distribution of tropical timber by promoting consumer awareness of tropical timber and timber products from sustainably managed and legally harvested sources.
4. Advise the Council on the type of statistical information to be provided by

Members.

5. Review the availability and quality of statistic and other information furnished by members under Article 27.5, and advise Council on appropriate action, including on technical capacity building needs of members of to meet their statistic and reporting requirements.
6. Make recommendations to Council on preparations for the biennial review of the international timber situation.

D. Functions of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management

1. Exchange information on the management of tropical timber producing forests and identify ways to enhance the sustainable management of tropical forests, inter alia by reviewing developments on:
 - a) Research and development applications for improving management of tropical timber producing forests;
 - b) Afforestation and reforestation, and rehabilitation and restoration of degraded forest land;
 - c) The application of ITTO and other comparable criteria and indicators for sustainable forest management as important tools for all members to assess, monitor and promote progress toward sustainable management of their forests;
 - d) Conservation of other forest values, such as biodiversity and wildlife, in timber producing forests;
 - e) Integrated approaches to forest management, including protected areas;
 - f) Addressing threats from fire, pests, diseases and invasive alien species; and
 - g) The relationship of forests to sustainable development, poverty alleviation, food security and climate change.
2. Share experiences on national policies aimed at sustainable utilization and conservation of timber producing forests, as well as on the implementation of national forest programmes.
3. Consider strategies to enhance the capacity of forest-dependent communities to sustainably manage tropical timber producing forests.
4. Make recommendations to Council on the above matters, as appropriate.

E. Terms of reference for the Committee on Finance and Administration Functions of the Committee on Finance and Administration¹²

1. Examine and make recommendations to the Council regarding approval of the Organization's administrative budget and the management operations of the Organization.
2. Review the assets and liabilities of the Organization and make recommendations to the Council on prudent asset and cash flow

¹² Terms of reference as revised by Decision 7(LII).

- management and levels of reserves needed to carry out its work.
3. Review the work and recommendations of the Investment Oversight Panel.
 4. Examine and make recommendations to the Council on the budgetary implications of the Organization's biennial work programme and on actions that might be taken to secure the resources needed to implement the objectives of the ITTA.
 5. Recommend to the Council the choice of independent auditors and review the independent audited statements pursuant to the requirements of the ITTO Auditing Standard.
 6. Recommend to the Council any modifications the Committee may judge necessary to the Organization's Rules of Procedure, Staff Regulations and Rules or the Financial Rules and Rules Related to Projects including their respective Annexes.
 7. Review the Organization's revenues and the extent to which they constrain the work of the Secretariat.

F. Committee Procedures

1. Where appropriate, Committees should meet jointly. As a general rule, the three Technical Committees meet in joint sessions when considering matters of mutual interest including crosscutting issues, annual market discussion, findings of diagnostic missions and ex-post evaluations of completed projects. The Committees on Forest Industry and on Economics, Statistics and Markets will continue to meet jointly due to their related agendas.