

“STRENGTHENING MARKET INFORMATION SYSTEMS TO ENHANCE TRADE AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE IN THE FOREST SECTOR OF GUYANA”

Working with the local stakeholders, including the private sector, the Government of Guyana through the Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC) is implementing an ITTO funded project aimed at: ***Strengthening market information systems to enhance trade and market intelligence in the forest sector of Guyana.*** The Project is part of the ITTO’s Thematic Programme on Trade and Market Transparency which seeks to develop and integrate market information system to enhance market transparency and market access in Guyana.

In its sixth month of implementation out of planned 18 months duration, the project is already seeing accomplishment of its planned outputs and outcomes. This has received strong impetus from early inputs made by the private sector resulting in the project being well positioned to accomplish its planned objectives. In early 2013, the project saw the execution of five (5) regional stakeholder workshops that enabled the participation of forest harvesting and added value wood processing operations, to discuss the main aspects of market information requirements for local stakeholders, and how this system can be best utilised to maximize the value derived from and the impact of such utilization from Guyana’s forests.



Sawn Timber Produced at Forest Concession in Guyana. Targeting a Marketing Strategy towards Added Value at the Community Level. Photo by Pradeepa Bholanath

So far, project implementation has commenced in the areas of diagnostic studies being done on the specific data gaps that relate to production, markets and trade; assessment of factors affecting markets and measures impacting tropical timber use; a technical study and one market survey on factors related to competitiveness such as chain of custody, demand and supply, niche markets and other producers; and engagement of stakeholders in developing an updated marketing Strategy for Guyana’s forest sector.

The development of an enhanced mechanism for the collection and analysis of market and trade data is already taking shape and had advanced to the database development and pilot testing

stage. Upon completion of this enhanced information system, it is expected that this will allow for appropriate actions to be taken in several regard that will bring about benefits to the forest sector and Guyana as a whole: it will allow for better planning and allocation of state forest resources; it will further allow for marketing efforts to be more strategic that will lead to expansion of key markets for added value products.

Initial conclusions of the draft marketing Strategy for Guyana’s forest sector highlights two main strengths of Guyana’s forest, which include the availability of raw materials and proximity to some of the Guyana’s major markets i.e. North America and Caribbean. Since the ITTO diagnostic mission to Guyana in 2002, the Government, through the GFC and in collaboration with the forest industry, has continued implementing a number of positive changes to Guyana’s forest management policies and systems aimed at the sustainable management of the country’s forest resources. The FAO



Dressed Sawn Lumber Produced in Guyana for Export Market. A Key Area being targeted to enhance Guyana’s Forest Sector Competitiveness. Photo by Pradeepa Bholanath

estimates the rate of deforestation in Guyana to be one of the lowest in South America. In an environment of growing recognition of strong environmental practices in the tropical timber market, sustainable forest management and an effective forest monitoring framework in Guyana have been identified by the Strategy to be two of the biggest advantages that Guyana has. In 2010 and 2012, assessments conducted by Pöyry Forest Industry and Indufor, concluded that the actual deforestation rate over the period 1990-2010 was 0.02% to 0.06% with the recent annual results for 2011 concluding an rate of 0.054% for the entire country. With its low rates of forest loss, continued implementation of SFM should ensure ongoing supply of raw material for the industry into the future, which is a major strength for Guyana's forest sector.

This ITTO Project will contribute directly to capitalising on these strengths by enhancing trade and market systems, diagnostic studies and assessment on market information and competitiveness factors, complemented with training and capacity building, to deliver on an outcome of maintaining Guyana's forest whilst enhancing the value derived for the forest.

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Executing Agency: Guyana Forestry Commission (GFC)
Author: Pradeepa Bholanath
e-mail: project.coordinator@forestry.gov.gy
website: <http://www.forestry.gov.gy/>