



ITTO

INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

ITTC(XXV)/20
9 November 1998

Original: ENGLISH

TWENTY-FIFTH SESSION
3-9 November 1998
Yokohama

DECISION 4(XXV)

FURTHER STRENGTHENING AND STREAMLINING THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEES

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling Decision 5(XXIV) on further streamlining the work of the Committees;

Welcoming the Report of the Expert Group on Strengthening and Streamlining the Work of the Committees, and the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals [ITTC(XXV)/8] and the Report of the Meeting of the Expert Panel to Organize the Work and Agendas of the Committees [ITTC(XXV)/14];

Considering the Report of the Consultants on Revision of Project Related Guidelines and Manuals [ITTC(XXV)/12];

Recognizing the continuing need for the Committees to assess and streamline their organization of work and to restructure their agenda to ensure an appropriate balance;

Also recognizing the continuing need for the Committees to reflect an appropriate balance between project and policy work in order to attain the overall objectives of the ITTA, 1994;

Decides to:

1. Adopt the procedures contained in Annex A to this decision for strengthening and streamlining the project and policy work of the Committees;
2. Authorize the Executive Director to request the consultants on revision of project-related guidelines and manuals to take into consideration Annex A to this Decision in finalizing their work on these guidelines and manuals;
3. Revise the procedures for selection of and reporting by the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals as contained in Annex B to this Decision;
4. Request the Executive Director to prepare for consideration by Council at its Twenty-sixth Session a preliminary paper on options for the frequency and duration of Council and Committee Sessions for further strengthening and streamlining the work of Council and Committees, noting that one Council Session a year will be held at the location of Headquarters in Yokohama, Japan.

ANNEX A

Procedures for Strengthening and Streamlining Project and Policy Work of the Committees

The chairpersons and the vice-chairpersons of the Committees will meet at the venue of the sessions one day before the sessions start in order to be briefed by the Secretariat on the agenda for the meeting.

Project Work

Project work takes a lot of time of the Committees, the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals and the Secretariat. Currently the total number of projects and pre-projects in progress is about 140. The number of new proposals submitted amounts to approximately 80 to 100 per year, while the number of projects and pre-projects approved by the Council is about 30 to 50. Annually about 30 to 40 projects and pre-projects are being funded.

In order to contain project cycle activities within acceptable limits, it is important that the quality of project work be improved. Projects reflect the implementation of policy work in the field and are showpieces of the ITTO. At the same time project work should not be allowed to completely engulf the administrative capacity of the Organization. Sufficient time must be available for policy work as requested by the Council.

I. Identification

1. Urge Members to submit Project ideas (1-2 pages with defined format) to the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals for assessment and advice as the first step in the project cycle.
2. Countries should be reminded that cooperation between member countries can improve the quality of the identification process.
3. Project proposals submitted to ITTO should fit within the current ITTO Action Plan and within the context of the national forestry policy of the member countries.

II. Formulation

1. Encourage wider use of the mechanism provided by PD73/89 Rev.3 (M,F,I), in particular through Project Formulation workshops, to support project formulation.
2. Encourage wider use of pre-projects to prepare high quality project proposals, whenever necessary.

III. Submission

1. Require member countries to define clearly the national authority responsible for ITTO matters. That authority must screen proposals to ensure that they reflect national priorities and are of adequate technical quality.
2. Require member countries to channel the proposals through their established ITTO contact point.
3. In view of the limited number of project proposals that the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals can appraise, the national authority responsible for ITTO should provide a list of project proposals in order of priority for consideration by the Expert Panel.

IV. Appraisal and approval

Only project proposals requiring essential modifications will be subject to a reassessment by the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals and the Panel will forward to the Committees only those proposals requiring minor or no modifications. The only exception to this rule will be in the case of proposals where the proposer is unable to agree with the Panel after three revisions.

V. Financing

1. Require the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals to identify those proposals which meet the criteria for funding from the BPF.
2. Encourage Members to clarify their priorities with respect to project financing to achieve the objectives in the current ITTO Action Plan.

VI. Implementation and monitoring

1. The Secretariat has the mandate to make the results of implementation and monitoring available to the executing agency, recipient country, donor/s. To reduce the need for lengthy discussions in the Committees, the Secretariat will report only on projects with implementation problems to be dealt with in the Committee sessions.
2. The Secretariat will ensure an external annual financial audit of all projects with a duration of two years or more and a budget above \$ 200,000.
3. The Committees will deal with progress reporting for pre-projects and projects under a single agenda item, and similarly for completed pre-projects and projects. This will slightly reduce the number of documents.
4. The Secretariat will develop a standard format for implementing agencies to report on projects and pre-projects in progress as well as for completed projects and pre-projects.

VII. Evaluation

1. Require the Secretariat to prepare for each Committee a combined document on completed pre-projects and projects. These documents, consisting of a report of not more than two pages per completed pre-project or project will be prepared by the Secretariat on the basis of the reports and information received from the implementing agencies and the steering committees. Full final reports by implementing agencies will not be included in the Committee agenda. These reports will be available to member countries upon request. However, they will only be available in the original ITTO working language in which they were prepared. This will reduce the workload of the Secretariat and the translators.
2. On the basis of the document prepared by the Secretariat, the Committees will decide upon the necessity of ex-post evaluation for selected projects. The document prepared by the Secretariat will include a mention of the financial resources available for ex-post evaluations. These evaluation reports will go to the respective Committee for consideration under a separate agenda item.

VIII. Dissemination

The Secretariat will:

1. devise and implement a common strategy for dissemination of project results, methodologies, costs etc.;

2. include in the contract with implementing agencies that they report the outcome of the project and the lessons learned as well as any publications produced for inclusion in the Tropical Forest Update (TFU);
3. use the Internet as a medium for communication of project work;
4. include in the ITTO Project Formulation Manual, a request to include in project proposals how project outcomes will be disseminated.

Policy Work

Policy work is the other important task of the Committees. It should contribute to the work of the Council in guiding the directions in which the Organization develops. Inputs for policy work come mainly from global developments, the current ITTO Action Plan, the annual ITTO Work Programme, recommendations of the Informal Advisory Group and from completed Pre-projects and Projects.

1. Restructure the agendas of the Committees to include a separate agenda item for policy work.
2. Use the current ITTO Action Plan, the policy-relevant aspects of the annual ITTO Work Programme, the findings of completed projects and Council Decisions as the primary basis for identifying items for policy development.
3. Decide during each Session of each Committee those subjects which will be discussed under the agenda item Policy Work during its next session and agree upon the way to prepare for such a discussion in the Committee.

ANNEX B

Procedures for Selection of and Reporting by the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals

1. The Council sets the criteria for the eligibility of the members of the Expert Panel. On the basis of those criteria, the Secretariat creates a database of experts eligible for the Panel on the basis of C.V.'s provided by member countries. The caucuses will select the members of the Expert Panel from the database taking into account the need to ensure balance of expertise in the areas of work of the Committees.
2. The existing checklist for Panel members will be used as a reference.
3. The general observation of the report produced by the Panel will appear as a separate item on the agenda of the joint session of the three Committees. Comments on individual projects will be included in the project briefs of the three Committees.

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