



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
TIMBER COUNCIL**

Distr.
GENERAL

ITTC/EP-58
27 September 2023

Original: ENGLISH

**REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL
FOR TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS**

**Fifty-eighth Expert Panel
Virtual review June/July 2023**

Table of Contents

	<u>Pages</u>
Report of the Expert Panel	3
1. Exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic	
2. Terms of reference	
3. Panel membership	
4. Appraisal procedures and criteria	
5. Appraisal and assessment carried out	
6. General findings	
7. Panel decisions on Project and Pre-project Proposals	
Appendix I Terms of Reference of the Expert Panel.....	7
Appendix II Rating Categories of the ITTO System for Technical Appraisal	8
Appendix III List of Project/Pre-project Proposals reviewed by the Expert Panel.....	9
Appendix IV Membership of the Expert Panel.....	10
Appendix V Scoring table for the assessment of new Project and Pre-project Proposals.....	12
Appendix VI Flow charts for deciding categories in the scoring system	14
Annex Assessment, recommendation and conclusion by the Fifty-eighth Panel on each Project and Pre-project Proposal.....	16

**REPORT OF THE 58th EXPERT PANEL FOR THE
TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS
(Expert Panel)
VIRTUAL REVIEW**

1. EXIGENCIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The 58th meeting of the Expert Panel was scheduled to be held at the ITTO Secretariat in Yokohama, June-July 2023. After consultation with the members of the Expert Panel, it was decided to conduct the 58th EP as a virtual review, but with a recommendation to hold the 59th meeting of the Expert Panel in-person in Yokohama at that ITTO Secretariat in 2024. In order to not leave the seven proposals received under the Spring 2023 (Deadline 28 November 2022) and Autumn 2023 (Deadline 10 April 2023) cycles, the Secretariat proposed to the members of the Expert Panel a virtual review procedure (see section 4). The procedure was considered feasible and endorsed by the members of the Expert Panel.

2. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The Expert Panel (ITTC/EP-58) worked in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached, see **Appendix I**. Furthermore, it has been guided by the endorsement of the Council at its 40th Session of Document ITTC(XL)/5 and, in particular the authorization contained in paragraph 7, to apply the “Revised ITTO System for Technical Appraisal of Project and Pre-project Proposals”. The Fifty-eighth Panel appraised the proposals and classified them according to categories listed in **Appendix II** applying the current consolidated version of the scoring system summarized in **Appendix V** and **Appendix VI**.

3. PANEL MEMBERSHIP

The Fifty-eighth Expert Panel was attended by the ten members listed in Appendix IV, with two nominations from the Producer Group still pending at the time of preparing this report. Due to the virtual review process agreed (see section 4), no Chairperson was elected for this Expert Panel.

4. APPRAISAL PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA

- 4.1. The procedures, aspects and guidelines applied by the Panel to appraise Project and Pre-project Proposals are laid down in the Terms of Reference of the Expert Panel for the Technical Appraisal of ITTO Project Proposals (Appendix I). The appraisal also took into account the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) and the ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (GEEW).
- 4.2. The panel members also made use of the established ITTO scoring system for the technical appraisal for proposals which has been created as a tool to facilitate the categorization of the proposals.
- 4.3. All documentation needed by the Panel members for their appraisal was posted online (using Dropbox) including the proposals, review instructions, introductions of each proposal prepared by the Secretariat, scoring sheets, briefing notes for new panel members or relevant ITTO guidelines.
- 4.4. The virtual process was launched on 19 June 2023 with a deadline of 24 July 2023.
- 4.5. The appraisal procedure endorsed by the members of the Expert Panel included the following steps:
 - a) In accordance with established practice, each proposal was assigned to two Panel members, one from a Producer country and one from a Consumer country;
 - b) Each Panel member would complete the common appraisal sheet (Scoring Table) for the proposals assigned to her/him;
 - c) After completion the appraisal sheets (Scoring Table) would be returned to the ITTO Secretariat;
 - d) In cases where both reviewers ranked a proposal as Category 1 (commended to the Committee with only minor modifications required), such proposal would go forward to the Committee/Council for approval;
 - e) In cases where both reviewers ranked a proposal as Category 4 (not in line with ITTO objectives or requiring complete revision), the proposal would be returned to the proponent;
 - f) In all other cases (reviewers have a divergence of views/rank differently, reviewers rank a proposal as Category 2 (requiring essentials revisions) or Category 3 (a pre-project is required), such proposals would be held until such time that the panel can physically meet.
- 4.6. In cases where revised proposals were submitted, the Panel members also referred to the overall and specific recommendations made by the earlier Panel(s) to assess if these recommendations had been adequately addressed.

5. APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT

- 5.1. Seven (7) project proposals were received for appraisal by the Fifty-eighth Expert Panel, including one proposal, i.e., PD 934/23 (F) 'Strengthening the conservation of the critically endangered Rosewood (*Dalbergia* spp.) in Dakrong Nature Reserve and Dong Nai Conservation Landscape, Viet Nam', resulting from concept note submitted under previous calls for concept notes under ITTO's new financing architecture – phase II in accordance with Decision 4(LVI). The overall list of 7 Project Proposals reviewed by the Expert Panel and the category of decision allocated to each proposal is presented in Appendix III. The procedures and criteria applied for the assessment have been specified above in section 4. In addition to the above mentioned proposals processed during the Spring and Autumn cycles, selected EP members also performed intersession on-demand review of three proposals (PD 927/22 Rev.2 (F) Indonesia, PD 931/23 (F) Costa Rica, and PD 932/23 (F) Peru) derived from concept notes (CN-21002-Indonesia, CN-21005-Costa Rica, and CN-22014-Peru).
- 5.2. The ITTO Secretariat allocated the Project Proposals in three blocks so that the Panel could deal with all proposals related to Reforestation and Forest Management (RFM) (5), with those related to Forest Industry (I) (1), and those related to Economics, Statistics and Markets (ESM) (1). This arrangement facilitated the appraisal as well as the formulation of the overall assessment and specific recommendations for each proposal listed in the Annex of this report.
- 5.3. The ITTO Secretariat assisted the work of the Panel by providing a general introduction of each proposal, also addressing any previous deliberations.
- 5.4. In following-up the results of the appraisal and following common practice, the Secretariat provided the following information and documents to all countries who have submitted proposals:
- The Overall Assessment and Specific Recommendations on each proposal submitted by the country (Annex);
 - General findings and final categories commended by the Panel.

6. GENERAL FINDINGS

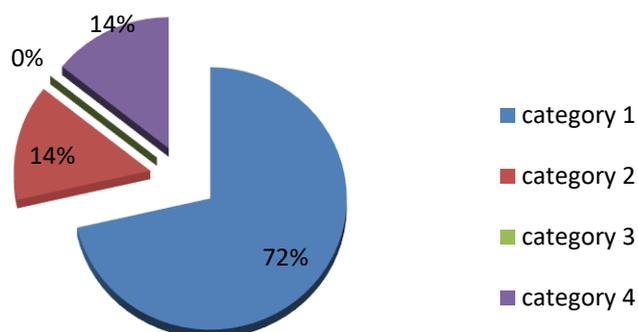
The Panel noted that:

- Five (5) Project Proposals (72 percent of the total) were commended to the Committee for final appraisal with minor modifications required (category 1);
- One (1) Project Proposal (14 percent of the total) will be sent back to proponent for essential revision, rated as category 2;
- None (0) Project Proposal (0 percent of the total) received a category 3, indicating that the project requires a pre-project to better formulate a new proposal; and
- One (1) Project Proposal (14 percent of the total) received a category 4, indicating that the Expert Panel does not commend these to the Committee for approval as they require complete reformulation.

See paragraph 7, pie chart "*proposals by category*".

7. PANEL DECISIONS ON PROJECT AND PRE-PROJECT PROPOSALS

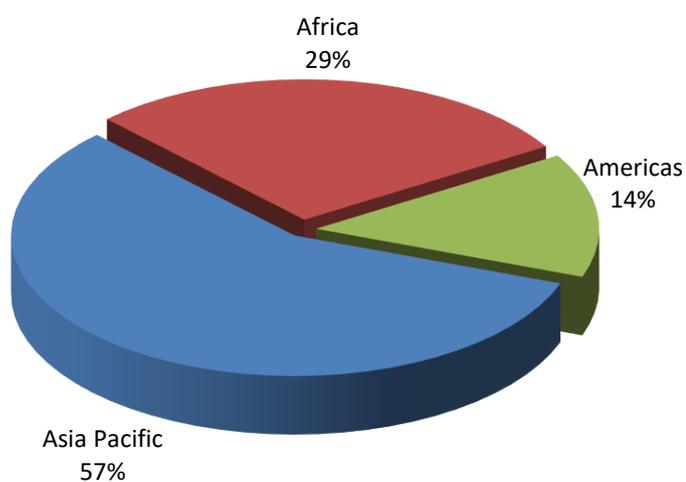
The Panel's decisions are listed in Appendix III, in accordance with established practice. Proposals classified by category, by regions, by committee areas and by submitting countries are summarised in the following tables and charts:



Summary of Project and Pre-project Proposals submitted to the Fifty-eighth Expert Panel by Region

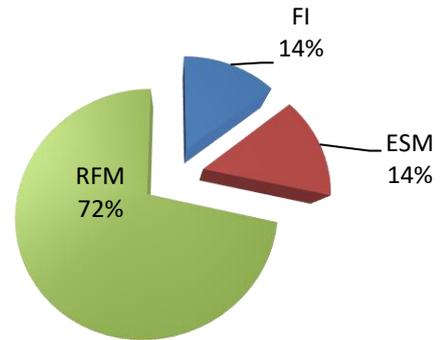
Region	Project Proposals				Pre-project Proposals				Total
	RFM	FI	ESM	Total	RFM	FI	ESM	Total	
<i>Asia Pacific</i>	2	-	1	3	-	1	-	1	4
<i>Africa</i>	1	-	-	1	1	-	-	1	2
<i>Americas</i>	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	1
Total	3	-	1	4	2	1	-	3	7

RFM = Reforestation and Forest Management
 FI = Forest Industry
 ESM = Economics, Statistics and Markets



Decisions of the 58th Expert Panel on Project and Pre-project Proposals by Committee Area

Category	Committee			Total
	RFM	FI	ESM	
<i>Projects</i>				
1	3	-	1	4
2	-	-	-	-
3	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-
Total	3	-	1	4
<i>Pre-projects</i>				
1	1	-	-	1
2	1	-	-	1
4	-	1	-	1
Total	2	1	-	3



Decisions of the 58th Expert Panel on Project and Pre-project Proposals by Submitting Country

Country	Category				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Honduras		(1)	-	-	(1)
India	1	-	-	(1)	(1)+1
Thailand	1	-	-	-	1
Togo	(1)+1	-	-	-	(1)+1
Vietnam	1	-	-	-	1
Total	5	(1)	-	(1)	7

Note: Parenthesis indicates pre-project.

APPENDIX I

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXPERT PANEL FOR THE TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Panel shall:

- (i) Assess new Project and Pre-project Proposals submitted to the organization. The recommendations for amendments to these proposals shall be made by the Expert Panel exclusively for the purpose of ensuring their technical soundness;
- (ii) Screen the Project Proposals for their relevance to ITTO's Action Plan and Work Programs (in the areas of Economics, Statistics and Markets, Reforestation and Forest Management, and Forest Industry), and consistency with ITTO decisions and policy guidelines, but not otherwise prioritize them;
- (iii) Where reformulation involving major amendments is recommended, request to carry out a final appraisal of the revised versions of Project and Pre-project Proposals, prior to their presentation to the relevant ITTO Committees;
- (iv) Report on the results of the technical assessment of Project and Pre-project Proposals to the submitting governments and to the ITTO Council and Committees, through the ITTO Secretariat;
- (v) The Expert Panel shall take into consideration previous Expert Panels' reports.

The Expert Panel, in assessing Projects and Pre-projects, shall also take into account:

- (a) their relevance to the objectives of the ITTA, 2006 and the requirement that a Project or Pre-project should contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Agreement objectives;
- (b) their environmental and social effects;
- (c) their economic effects;
- (d) their cost effectiveness;
- (e) the need to avoid duplication of efforts;
- (f) if applicable, their relationship and integration with ITTO policy work and their consistency to the latest ITTO Strategic Action Plan including:
 - Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Production Forests, 1993;
 - ITTO Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests, 1996;
 - ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics, 2020;
 - ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests, 2009; and
 - Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests, 2015.

APPENDIX II

Rating Categories of the ITTO System for Technical Appraisal of Project and Pre-project Proposals

Rating schedule for Project Proposals

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.

Category 3: The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a Pre-project Proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the Pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the Project Proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee (e.g. complete reformulation is necessary; in case of rev.2 Project Proposals; Project not relevant; Project with insufficient information, etc.).

Rating schedule for Pre-project Proposals

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with the incorporation of amendments.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that the Pre-project Proposal is not commended to the Committee. The proposal is submitted with the recommendation not to approve the Pre-project Proposal.

APPENDIX III
List of Project and Pre-project Proposals reviewed by the
Fifty-eighth Expert Panel

Project No.	Title	Country	Category
PPD 203/23 (F)	Support for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in the Oti Plain, Togo	Togo	1
PPD 204/23 (F)	Project on Governance of Broadleaved Forests in the Lake Yojoa Region and Resilience of Forest-Related Livelihoods	Honduras	2
PPD 205/23 (I)	Use of Metabolomic and Genomic Information to Increase the Durability of Wood and Decrease the Rotation Age of Teak	India	4
PD 914/20 Rev.2 (F) *	Towards Southeast Asian sustainable coastal forest management by good biodiversity restoration practices and Empowering WomEn (EWE) in decision support systems	Thailand	1
PD 925/22 Rev.1 (F)	Support to the Local Communities of the Mono Plain for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in Togo	Togo	1
PD 933/23 (M)	5th World Teak Conference: Sustainable Development of the Global Teak Sector - Adapting to Future Markets and Environments	India	1
PD 934/23 (F)	Strengthening the Conservation of the Critically Endangered Rosewood (<i>Dalbergia</i> spp.) In Dakrong Nature Reserve and Dong Nai Conservation Landscape, Viet Nam	Vietnam	1

* Note: The proponent has withdrawn the proposal on 5 September 2023.

APPENDIX IV

**MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIFTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE EXPERT PANEL
FOR TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF PROJECT PROPOSALS
Virtual review, June/July 2023**

PRODUCER COUNTRIES:

- 1. Mr. Arevalo, Rosven (Colombia)**
Ph. D. Wood Science
Address. Carrera 3 No. 2-03 Apto 103 Ibagué
Colombia

Tel: (57) 8-2635385
Mobile: (57) 3003000915
E-mail: rlareval@ut.edu.co
- 2. Mr. Dambis, Kaip (Papua New Guinea)**
Manager Policy & Aid Coordination
Address: Papua New Guinea Forest Authority
P. O. Box 5055, BOROKO
National Capital District
Papua New Guinea

Tel: (675) 3254433
Fax: (675) 3254433
E-mail: DKaip@pngfa.gov.pg
- 3. Dr. Iddrisu, Mohammed Nurudeen (Ghana)**
Director of Operations
Timber Industry Development Division
Ghana Forestry Commission
P.O Box TD 783 / 515, Takoradi
Ghana

Tel: (233) 244 688 411
E-mail: nurudeen15@yahoo.com
- 4. Mr. Lokossou, Achille Orphée (Benin)**
Ingenieur Forestier à la Direction
Générale des Eaux, Forêts et Chasse
Ministère du Cadre de Vie et du Développement Durable
BP 2014 Abomey-Calavi
Benin

Tel: (229) 95450724
E-mail: lokossou@yahoo.fr

CONSUMER COUNTRIES:

- 1. Ms. Ghadiali, Aysha (U.S.A.)**
International Policy Advisor
U.S. Forest Service (USFS)
International Programs
1 Thomas Circle, 400
Washington, D.C. 20009
U.S.A.

Tel: (1-202-644-4625)
Fax: (1-202-644-4603)
E-mail: aysha.ghadiali@usda.gov
- 2. Dr. Pinkard, Libby (Australia)**
Research Director, Living Landscapes
CSIRO Environment
Private Bag 12
Hobart, Tasmania 7001
Australia

Tel: (61) 6237 5656
E-mail: libby.pinkard@csiro.au
- 3. Dr. Schroeder, Jobst-Michael (Germany)**
Senior Scientist
Saselbergweg 90a
22395 Hamburg
Germany

Tel: (49-40) 6027767
Mobile: (49) 178-5755566
E-mail: jobst.schroeder@hotmail.com
- 4. Dr. Shim, Kug-Bo (Korea)**
Professor
Department of Wood & Paper Science
Chungbuk National University
1 Chungdae-ro, Seowon-gu
Chungju-si, Chungbuk, 28644
Republic of Korea

Tel: (82-43) 261-3200
E-mail: kbshim@chungbuk.ac.kr
- 5. Ms. Tabata, Akiko (Japan)**
Deputy Director
Wood Products Trade Office
Forest Policy Planning Department
Forestry Agency
1-2-1 Kasumigaseki
Chiyoda-ku
Tokyo 100-8952
Japan

Tel: (81-3) 3502-8063
Fax: (81-3) 3502-0305
E-mail: akiko_tabata670@maff.go.jp
- 6. Dr. Zhang, Zhongtian (China)**
Assistant Executive Director, Ph.D
APFNet
6th Floor Baoneng Bulding A
No.12 Futong Dong Dajie
Wangjing Area, Chaoyang District
Beijing
P.R China 100102

Tel: (86-10) 84217498
Fax: (86-10) 84216958
E-mail: zhangzhongtian@apfnet.cn; aaronzzt@163.com

APPENDIX V

Revised Scoring Table – ITTO Project Proposal (PD)

Weighted Scoring System								
1.	Project relevance, origin and expected outcomes (15)			Mark	Score	Threshold		
1.	1.	Relevance						
1.	1.	1.	<i>Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities (1.2.1)</i>				Y	
1.	1.	2.	<i>Relevance to the submitting country's policies (1.2.2)</i>				Y	
1.	2.	Origin (1.1)				5		
1.	3.	Geogr. location (1.3.1)+ Social, cultural and environ. aspects (1.3.2)				5		
1.	4.	Expected outcomes at project completion (1.4)				5		
2.	Project identification process (25)							
2.	1.	Institutional set up and organisational issues (4.1. + 2.1.1)				5		
2.	2.	Stakeholders				10	Y	6
2.	2.	1.	<i>Stakeholder analysis (2.1.2)</i>		5			
2.	2.	2.	<i>Stakeholders involved at inception (2.1.3.) & implementation (4.1.4.)</i>		5			
2.	3.	Problem analysis (2.1.3)				10	Y	6
2.	3.	1.	<i>Problem identification</i>		5			
2.	3.	2.	<i>Problem tree</i>		5			
3.	Project design (45)							
3.	1.	Logical framework matrix (2.1.4)				20	Y	13
3.	1.	1.	<i>Objectives (2.2)</i>		5			
3.	1.	2.	<i>Outputs (3.1.1)</i>		5			
3.	1.	3	<i>Indicators & means of verification (columns 2 and 3 of the LogFrame)</i>		5			
3.	1.	4	<i>Assumptions and risks (3.5.1)</i>		5			
3.	2.	Implementation				20	Y	13
3.	2.	1.	<i>Activities (3.1.2)</i>		5			
3.	2.	2	<i>Strategy (approaches and methods, 3.2)</i>		5			
3.	2.	3	<i>Work plan (3.3)</i>		5			
3.	2.	4	<i>Budget (3.4)</i>		5			
3.	3.	Sustainability (3.5.2)				5	Y	3
4.	Implementation arrangements (15)							
4.	1.	Project's management (EA - 4.1.1, Key staff - 4.1.2, SC - 4.1.3)				5	Y	3
4.	2.	Reporting, review, monitoring and evaluation (4.2)				5		
4.	3.	Dissemination and mainstreaming of project learning (4.3)				5		
Entire project proposal (100)					100,0%	Y	75%	
Category					1			

Marks indicate:

- 0 - Information is completely missing
- 1 - Very poor: some elements are there but the essential ones are missing
- 2 - Poor: essential elements are incomplete, insufficient, wrong or misunderstood
- 3 - Moderate: essential elements are available but unclear or inaccurate
- 4 - Good: clear, accurate and informative
- 5 - Excellent: clear, accurate, informative and comprehensive (perfectly integrated with other items)

Rating categories:

Category 1:	The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.
Category 2:	The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.
Category 3:	The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a Pre-project Proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal.
Category 4:	The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the Project Proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

Revised Scoring Table – ITTO PRE-PROJECT PROPOSALS (PPD)

Weighted Scoring System							
1.	PRE-PROJECT CONTEXT (5)			Mark	Score	Threshold	
1.	1.		Origin and justification		5		
1.	2.		Relevance				
1.	2.	1.	Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities			Y	
1.	2.	2.	Relevance to the submitting Country's policies			Y	
2.	JUSTIFICATION OF PRE-PROJECT (15)						
2.	1.		Objectives		15	Y	9
2.	1.	1.	Development objective	5			
2.	1.	2.	Specific objective	5			
2.	2.		Preliminary problem identification	5			
3.	PRE-PROJECT INTERVENTIONS (25)						
3.			Outputs and activities		10	Y	7
3.	1.		Outputs	5			
3.	2.		Activities, inputs and unit costs	5			
3.	3.		Approaches and methods		5		
3.	4.		Work plan		5		
3.	5.		Budget		5		
4.	IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS (15)						
4.	1.		Executing agency and organizational structure		5		
4.	2.		Pre-Project Management		5		
4.	3.		Monitoring and reporting		5		
Entire project proposal (60)					100,0%	Y	75%
Category					1		

Marks indicate:

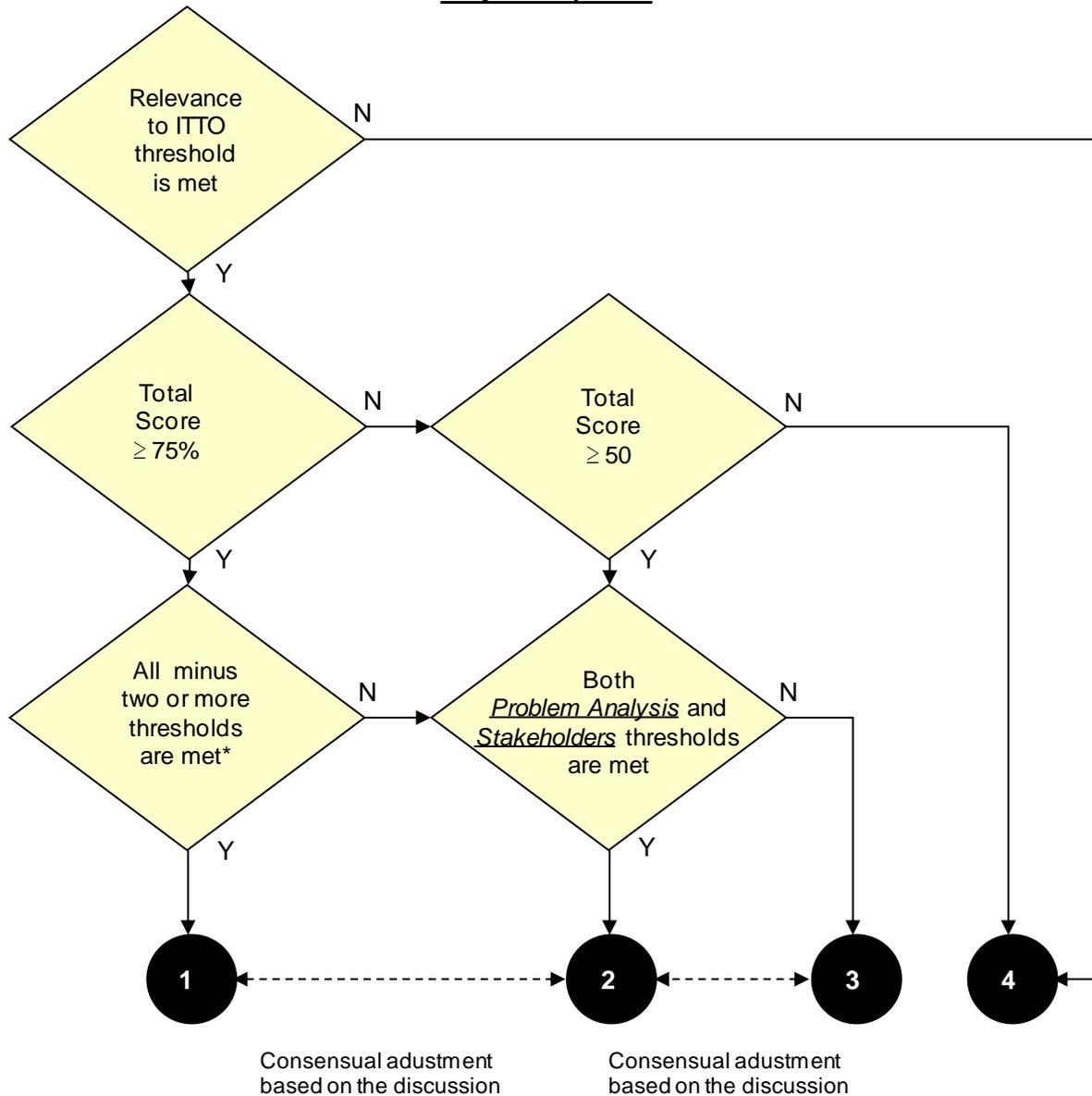
- 0 - Information is completely missing
- 1 - Very poor: some elements are there but the essential ones are missing
- 2 - Poor: essential elements are incomplete, insufficient, wrong or misunderstood
- 3 - Moderate: essential elements are available but unclear or inaccurate
- 4 - Good: clear, accurate and informative
- 5 - Excellent: clear, accurate, informative and comprehensive (perfectly integrated with other items)

Rating categories:

Category 1:	The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.
Category 2:	The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.
Category 4:	The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the Project Proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee

Appendix VI
Flow charts for deciding categories in the scoring system

Project Proposals

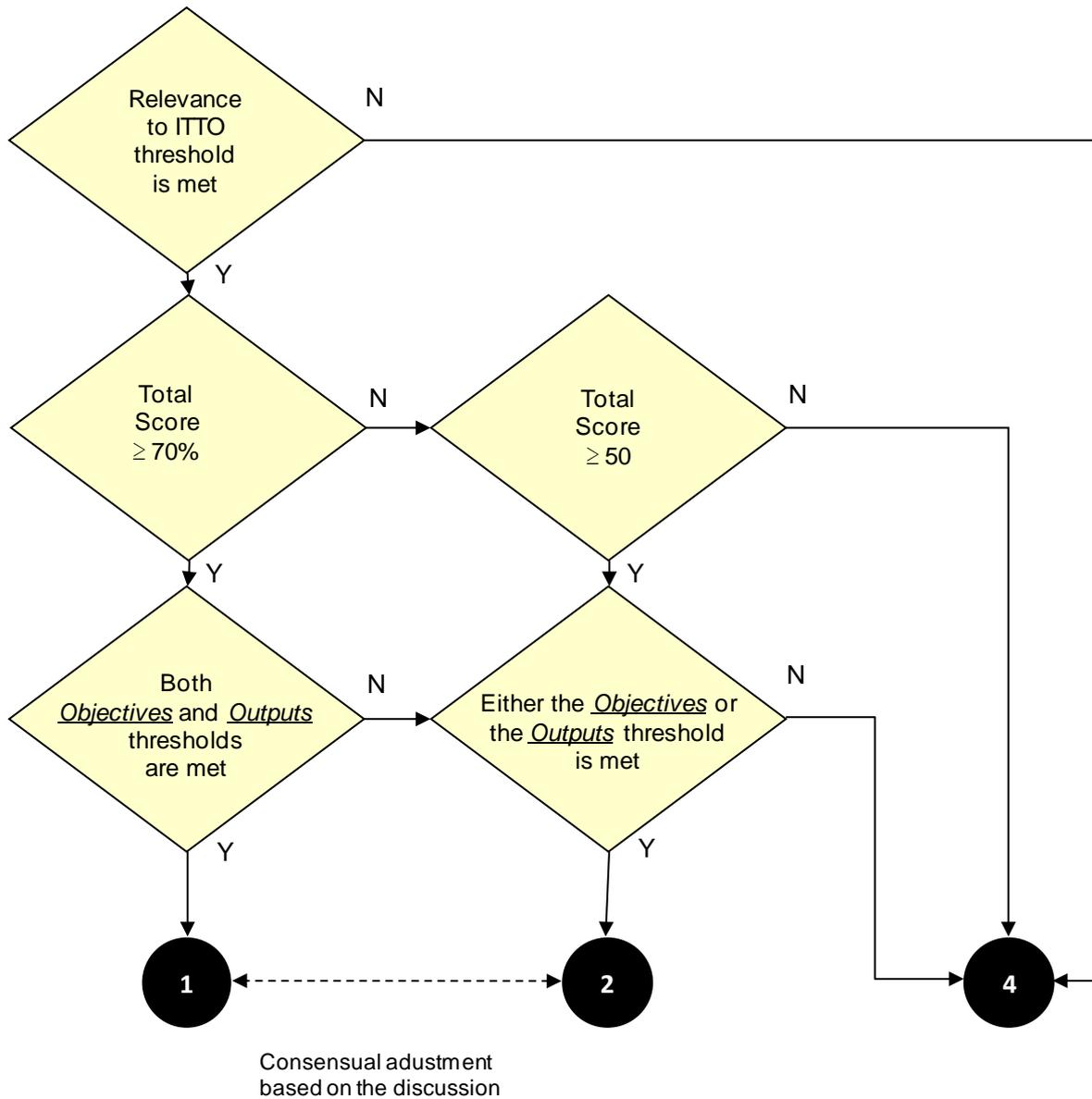


*Thresholds failed cannot be any two among the following three:

- Stakeholder
- Logical Framework
- Sustainability

- Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments. Proposal commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments if any.
- Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee. Proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent.
- Category 3: The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a pre-project proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal. Proposal is missing fundamental information, consequently a pre-project is required and to be submitted to the EP.
- Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee. Proposal not recommended but submitted to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal, (a) either because a complete reformulation is necessary, or (b) because it's not relevant to ITTO. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

Pre-Project Proposals



Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments. Proposal commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments if any.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee. Proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee. Proposal not recommended but submitted to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal, (a) either because a complete reformulation is necessary, or (b) because it's not relevant to ITTO. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

Annex

**Assessment, recommendation and conclusion by the Fifty-eighth Expert Panel on
each Project and Pre-project Proposal**

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that main goal of the project is to support the restoration of degraded mangrove forests and the long-term sustainable management and rehabilitation efforts on mangrove ecosystems through the empowerment of women in Thailand, Cambodia and Myanmar.

The Panel noted that the revised proposal has addressed many of the questions and concerns raised in the earlier EP reviews. The stakeholder section has been improved. However, it is crucial to assess the causes of mangrove degradation and outline strategies for collaboration with communities to address the degradation. Without measures to deal with the underlying economic drivers of ongoing mangrove forest loss and degradation, the ability to reach the project's goals will be difficult. Section 3.5 outlines the proposed project's key assumptions and potential risks in Table 3.1, but it is necessary to underscore that the proposed mitigating measures rely on convincing local and national authorities.

Although the budget has been reduced, it is still high, and the cost of drones is still included. The Panel reiterated the importance of reducing travel costs by partners in the government and universities, where possible. It also noted that the project's duration is substantially longer than normal. Consideration could be given to dividing this proposal into two phases, although two reviews have gone with substantial improvements.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Refine Section on p. 4 "integration of women by deleting "who have a natural interest". It can be presented as "integration of women and the improvement of their livelihoods..." The reference to a "natural interest" should be avoided and the focus should be on empowering women without implying inherent tendencies;
2. Refine Section on p. 5 ("the efficient promotion of the respective strengths and takes into account specific reactions that women and men could and should take...") by revising it to emphasize "the efficient promotion of an individual's strengths". Remove "and takes into account specific reactions that women and men could and should take" as it is more appropriate to acknowledge individual's strengths irrespective of gender assumptions;
3. Further clarity on how the gender mainstreaming can be enhanced especially in Cambodia and Myanmar. There should be a possibility of looking on how Thailand has been very successful even though there have substantial different developmental needs (1.4);
4. The logical framework has been improved, but further refinements based on SMART model 2.1.4 are recommended. Some indicators still need further clarity;
5. Review and enhance the outcome indicators for specific objective (2.2.1) to ensure they adhere to the SMART criteria. Consider quantifying the restored mangrove forest area in hectares for each country and incorporate species selection discussions and modelling processes. This will form the basis for specific activities outlined in the budget; and
6. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 58th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category C on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized the importance of this proposal intending to contribute to the development and sustainable management of the Mono Plain forests in Togo, as a way of improving environmental conditions and local community's standard of living.

The Panel acknowledged that efforts had been made to address most of the comments in the overall assessment, as well as most of the specific recommendations, made by the Fifty-seventh Expert Panel. However, the Panel noted that there was still a need for improvement of some sections and sub-sections of the revised project proposal. This proposal was considered as Category C because it potentially has minimal or no adverse environmental or social impacts in relation to the ITTO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines.

The Panel noted that the 11th specific recommendation was not appropriately addressed because of the lack of consistency between the number Activities (6) under Output 2 and the number of equivalent elements (3) under the second Output in the Objective Tree. The 13th specific recommendation (with the work plan) and the 16th specific recommendation (with the master budget table) are related to the abovementioned lack of consistency. The Panel also noted that interesting information and data were included in Annex 5 instead of being in Section 1.3 (Target area) in the core part of the project document.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following recommendations:

1. Further improve Section 1.3 (Target area) by appropriately inserting the elements of Annex 5 which should be included in the core part of the project document for its better understanding.
2. Improve the Problem Tree with appropriate number of Sub-causes (6) under the second Cause of the Key Problem, while mirroring that improvement in the Objective Tree, so that the improvement could justify the number of Activities (6) under Output 2 in the work plan and in the master budget table.
3. Add as an annex, a technical sheet briefly describing the main species to be used for the project implementation: *Vitellaria paradoxa* (C.F.Gaertn) and *Parkia biglobosa* (Jacq.) R.Br. ex G.Don.
4. Include an annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 58th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category C on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist

PD 934/23 (F)

Strengthening the Conservation of the Critically Endangered Rosewood (*Dalbergia spp.*) in Dakrong Nature Reserve and Dong Nai Conservation Landscape, Vietnam

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The project aims at preparing a rosewood conservation plan with a suitable management regime for wild population management and monitoring, habitat enrichment to facilitate natural regeneration, and a community-based seedling production and replanting program that helps replant the rosewood species in their known degraded habitats.

The Panel opined that the proposal was well prepared in accordance with the ITTO manual for project formulation. Minor amendments are still needed to improve the project proposal performance.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve and enlarge the presentation of geographical location map;
2. In Section 1.3, revisit the environmental context of the target area, If necessary, strengthen with additional information;
3. Section 1.3.1, clearly name the bordering countries with Vietnam;
4. In Section 1.4, give number to each specific outcome;
5. In Section 2.1.2, further breakdown stakeholder categories into primary, secondary and tertiary;
6. In Section 2.3.1, the development impact is clear but some of the impact indicators would seem to be outside the control of the project. Reframe development indicator 1. Controlling illegal logging by 2024 sounds very ambitious and presumably relies on sanctions that fall beyond the project's control;
7. In Section 3.1.2, Clearly indicate activity/activities to be taken to address illegal logging;
8. In Section 3.2 (Activity 1.2), clarify who the audiences of the technical workshop are;
9. In Section 4.3, Improve the elaboration of this section and explain the dissemination of the project's results; and
10. Include an Annex that shows the responses to the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold** and underlined) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category C on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist

PPD 203/23 (F)

Support for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in the Oti Plain, Togo

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel acknowledged the relevance of project proposal to be formulated with the aim to address the sustainable forest management concerns in the Oti Plain, in the Eco-floristic Zone I of Togo. This pre-project is justified by the lack of data due to the outdated nature of existing studies on the area combined with the non-availability of national expertise and the lack of material and financial resources. These shortcomings are a major impediment for developing a full project proposal directly.

The Panel noted that the pre-project proposal followed the structure provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation but there was still a need for improvement in the following sections and sub-sections : **(1)** Section 1.1 (Origin and justification) in which the geographical location map of the target area of the future project is missing for a better understanding; **(2)** Sub-section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities) referred to the elements regarding the conformity with the priorities and operational activities specified in the ITTO Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2013-2018 instead of the ITTO SAP 2022-2026; **(3)** Section 3.3 (Implementation approaches and methods) without clear reference to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23), as well as to the ITTO Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (PS-22), as the abovementioned guidelines should be taken into account while undertaking the survey on socio-economic aspects and conducting the project environmental and social impact assessment; **(4)** non-relevant budget lines found in the ITTO budget table in relation to the costs for the driver and vehicle fuel as no vehicle will be purchased under the pre-project implementation.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve Section 1.1 (Origin and justification) by inserting the geographical location maps of the target area of the future project which are included in Annex 5.
2. Improve Sub-section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities) by including the elements regarding the conformity with relevant strategic priorities and related targets specified in the current ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2022-2026.
3. Add in Section 3.3 (Implementation approaches and methods), some references in relation to the relevant elements in the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23), as well as in the ITTO Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (PS-22), for the purpose of the socio-economic survey and environmental assessment to be carried out during the pre-project implementation.
4. Readjust the ITTO budget in accordance with the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and also in the following way:
 - a) Delete the budget line 12.2 (driver) and budget line 51 (vehicle fuel) as no vehicle will be purchased with ITTO budget for the pre-project implementation,
 - b) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component 83) so as to conform with new standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO pre-project costs, after deleting the abovementioned budget lines; and
5. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 58th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category C on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist

PPD 204/23 (F)

Project on Governance of Broadleaved Forests in the Lake Yojoa Region and Resilience of Forest-Related Livelihoods (Honduras)

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the pre-project proposal focuses on a forest region in Honduras facing high deforestation pressure. The proposal highlights that "the improvement of the legality of harvesting, transportation, marketing and processing within the value chain" is the core issue of the pre-project, along with community empowerment.

However, there are several weaknesses in the proposal. These include: 1. It lacks specific information to fully support the pre-project proposal. 2. The proposal does not align with the intended objective of formulating a full project proposal. 3. The proposal lacks precise formulation of outputs and activities. It is not clear about what shall be reached and carried out. 4. Four outputs are related to 14 activities which are highly overambitious and would fit into a full proposal. 5. Output 1 and 2 (SFM and value chain) seem to be contradictory to Output 3 (conservation aspects). It is stated that 67 operations against illegal activities have already been carried out without success. This casts doubt on the viability of the success of the pre-project. Furthermore, the aspect of a germplasm bank is obscured. Therefore, the proposal requires a fundamental reformulation, either as a full proposal or as a refined pre-project with reduced activities, while also addressing the other identified weaknesses.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the list of abbreviations, as it is incomplete;
2. Further elaborate Section 1.1 (Origin and justification) by providing more information on the forest sector to support the origin and justification of the pre-project;
3. Briefly explain how the pre-project and its outcome are related to the ITTA 2006 not 1994 as listed;
4. Improve Section 2.2 (Preliminary problem identification) by further elaborating in detail the size of the project area and forest ownership. Improve the map with scale and legend and elaborate the representation of the blue/green colour;
5. Improve the presentation of the specific objective of the pre-project, taking into account the identification and formulation of a full project proposal, which is the key task of a pre-project. Reduce the specific objectives to 1 by concentrating on attainable goals. Clarify "non-traditional timber species";
6. Refine the four Outputs by focusing on Outputs 1 and 2 as these are logical in the scope of a pre-project;
7. Refine the identification of the pre-project activities since there are too many activities within the main scope of a pre-project. For instance, Activities 2.5 and 4.2 can take place in a full project proposal;
8. Review the engagement of four consultants in a pre-project as it is unusual in Section 3.3 (Approaches and methods)
9. Refine the pre-project duration within a year. The inventory of high value species is not justified while development of a full project is missing.
10. Reduce the pre-project budget less than US\$100,000, Duration of the consultants is not provided and their price levels seem to be high. Consider providing more resources from the EA, as it is weak that EA only provide a project administrator, a car, a computer and office supplies;
11. Improve Section 4.1 (Executing Agency and organizational structure) by providing more relevant information. Where are the other stakeholders like AF organizations embedded? What is ATL?;
12. Provide tasks and responsibilities of the key experts provided by the Executing Agency;
13. Provide ToRs for respective personnel and consultants funded by ITTO;
14. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 58th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the aim of this pre-project is to conduct a metabolomic-genomic study evaluating the genetic and environmental diversity of teak in India and assessing the socio-economic impact of mass production of highly durable short-rotation teak in local and global market.

However, as a pre-project proposal, the Panel noted the weaknesses in the overall formulation of this proposal, especially in the sections of origin, target sites, problem analysis, development and specific objectives, outputs and activities, and budget etc.

The Panel especially noted that the formulation of this pre-project does not closely follow the ITTO manual for project formulation, in which a pre-project should be designed to assist in the identification and elaboration of full project proposal, and a fundamental output of pre-project intervention is a full project proposal document. However, there is nothing about the development of such a full project proposal document as one of the outputs in this proposal. Further, the proponent has not responded to the recommendation of ITTO Secretariat to reformulate into a small project proposal.

Nevertheless, the Panel appreciates the potential of this pre-project and encourages the proponent to reformulate the proposal by taking into account the above comments and the following specific recommendations.

B) Specific Recommendations

1. Reformulate the origin and justification with a clear explanation on the process that has prompted the preparation and the submission of the pre-project.
2. List the relevant objectives and explain briefly how the pre-project will contribute to fulfil ITTA objectives.
3. Describe how the pre-project is relevant to the national forest policy of 1988 and the Agroforestry policy of 2014.
4. Reformulate the development objective with concise and clear contribution.
5. Reformulate the specific objective of this pre-project for the identification and formulation of a full project proposal as required in ITTO manual.
6. Describe the key problem and its main causes effects, especially the hinder for the elaboration of a full project proposal.
7. Refine the outputs with SMART qualitative and quantitative terms and add the main output of a full project proposal.
8. Provide corresponding inputs and unit costs for each activity.
9. Redraft the budget tables in accordance with the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation and present the budgets in US dollars.
10. Provide a detailed management structure and explanation on internal monitoring and reporting.

C) Conclusion

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the pre-project proposal.

Assessment by the Fifty-eighth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The proposal aims at the preparation and implementation of the 5th International Teak Conference. The Panel considered that proposal has been appropriately formulated. However, the Panel members are in view that the budget arrangement of the proposal needs to be improved. The Panel also noted that the proposal is missing tasks of core personnel and consultants and therefore, respective TORs should be included.

B) Specific Recommendations

1. In Section 1.3.1, provide information on conference location and facility (forum, lecture halls, seats);
2. In Section 2.1.4 and Section 2.2.1, formulate only 1 Development Objective;
3. In Section 2.1.3, elaborate more discussion on the problem analysis based on the existing problem tree.
4. In Section 2.1.4 and Section 3.1.1, refer to ITTO Manual for Project Formulation. Number of Outputs is associated with the number of Causes of the Core Problem as depicted in the Problem Tree. In your case, there are 4 Causes in the Problem Tree, but only 3 Outputs formulated. Refine the Problem tree, or add one more Output;
5. In Section 3.2, provide information on expected number of conference participants and define themes/sessions for working groups during conference;
6. In Section 3.4.1, define tasks and role of consultants and provide information on number of participants from last teak conferences. Note: provide information on the number of expected participants and recalculate the DSA. The rate of DSAs is considered too high and why they are allocated for 5 people only?;
7. In Section 3.4.2, provide attribute to each budget category;
8. In Section 4.1.2, add explanation on the Project Management Team;
9. Include an Annex that shows the responses to the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underlined) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category C on the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) checklist

* * *