



NEWS RELEASE

THEMATIC PROGRAMS GENERATE INTEREST

YOKOHAMA, JAPAN, 19 August 2009: Sixteen activity proposals from 9 countries submitted in response to an initial call for proposals for two new Thematic Programs on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (TFLET) and Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services in Tropical Forests (REDDES) were reviewed earlier this month by the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO).

ITTO is an intergovernmental organization with 60 members that develops and implements policies for sustainable tropical forest management and promotes the international trade of tropical timber. Since 1987 the Organization has provided grants worth over US\$330 million to fund over 900 projects and activities designed to promote sustainable forest management (SFM), conservation and sustainable development.

The proposals for assistance under the TFLET and REDDES Thematic Programs were assessed by advisory committees and funds totaling \$154,150 were recently granted to begin implementation of one activity under TFLET and one under REDDES. These were, respectively, "Strengthening the capacity of local communities of Chaiyaphum Province to manage community forests" (Thailand); and "Building a voluntary carbon marketing scheme to promote sustainable forest management" (ITTO Secretariat). Proposals submitted unsuccessfully can be reformulated taking into account input from the advisory committees and resubmitted for a second call for proposals by September 30.

Funding for the TFLET Thematic Program was pledged in 2007 and 2008 by several donors led by the Governments of the Netherlands, USA, Switzerland and Japan. Norway is so far the sole donor to the REDDES program. Pledges to date total \$4.9 million for TFLET and \$3.9 million for REDDES, with further inputs totaling \$10.1 million (TFLET) and \$14.1 million (REDDES) sought to fully fund both of these programs. Additional funds of \$25 million are also sought for another 3 Thematic Programs (on Community Forest Management and Enterprises; Trade and Market Transparency; and Industry Development and Efficiency) approved in 2008 but so far unfunded.

ITTO maintains its regular project cycle in addition to the new Thematic Programs. However, with attention focused on the new funding window offered by the Thematic Programs, donor interest in non-thematic projects has moderated compared to previous years. During the six month project cycle to June 30 2009, four projects worth just under \$2.3 million were fully funded: one to promote participatory rehabilitation and sustainable management of mangrove ecosystems in a park near Douala, Cameroon; another to forecast China's demand and supply of tropical timber to 2020, a third to help communities in Panama's Darien area to conserve and sustainably utilize a forest reserve; and an initiative to enhance carbon stocks through sustainable management of a national park in Indonesia. Partial funding was pledged to 2008-09 Work Program activities to analyze business models of community forest enterprises and to update the ITTO *Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests*. Additional funds were also pledged to ITTO's outreach activities and to allow the Organization to continue offering fellowships to deserving nationals of its member countries during 2009. Donors pledging funds during this project cycle were Japan, the USA, France and 7&i (a Japanese retailing firm that is partnering with ITTO to generate carbon offsets through tropical forest conservation and management, initially through funding the above Indonesian project).

For more information on ITTO, its Thematic Programs and/or the projects it supports, visit www.itto.int.