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ITTO Objective 2000 – Decision 2(XXIX)

Review of ITTO Diagnostic Missions

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

CAR	Central African Republic
C&I	Criteria and Indicators
DM(s)	Diagnostic Mission (s)
DMR(s)	Diagnostic Mission Report (s)
ITTC	International Tropical Timber Council
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
NGO(s)	Non-governmental organization (s)
PNG	Papua New Guinea
SFM	Sustainable forest management
ToR(s)	Terms of Reference (s)

1. Introduction

1.1. Antecedents and context

In November 2000 the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) adopted the Decision 2(XXIX) concerning ITTO Objective 2000. Its paragraph 5 authorized the Executive Director "*to render assistance to producer countries, on request, to identify, in each country, those factors which most severely limit progress towards achieving Objective 2000 and sustainable forest management and to formulate an action plan to overcome these constraints*". This Decision was based on previous decisions regarding progress towards sustainable management of tropical forests and trade in tropical timber from sustainably managed resources and on a consultants report on the review of progress made towards this objective[1].

Four conditions were attached to this part of Decision 2(XXIX): (1) ensure cooperation with the relevant authorities, industries and other stakeholders; (2) take into account national plans as well as ongoing strategic planning processes and programmes in the country concerned; (3) ensure that the cost of each individual programme of assistance does not exceed US$100,000 and; (4) authorize a maximum of 5 programmes of assistance per calendar year.

Pursuant to ITTC Decision 2(XXIX), the ITTO developed 23 Diagnostic Missions (DMs) in member countries (Table 1) in Africa, Asia & Pacific, and in the Latin America regions, to: "*(1) identify the factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of sustainable forest management in that country; (2) assemble these constraints in order of importance; and (3) recommend a sequence of actions to remove the constraints, providing cost estimates whenever possible*".

Table 1. Diagnostic missions realized during the period 2001-2008

Region	Country	Mission date
Africa	Cameroon	September 2008
	Central African Republic	March 2002
	Republic of Congo	October 2001
	Gabon	January 2005
	Côte d'Ivoire	August 2008
	Liberia	May 2005
	Nigeria	August 2007
	Togo	February 2008
Asia Pacific	Cambodia	September 2004
	Fiji	October 2004
	India	April 2006
	Indonesia	September 2001
	Papua New Guinea	February 2007
	Philippines	May 2003
	Thailand	March 2006
Latin America	Brazil	October 2001
	Ecuador	April 2004
	Guyana	October 2002
	Mexico	May 2005
	Panama	August 2004
	Peru	June 2003
	Suriname	August 2003
	Trinidad and Tobago	December 2002

The first DMs were carried out in the second half of 2001 in Brazil, Indonesia and Congo[2]. Eighteen DMs were completed by the end of 2006 when some ITTO Council members, as well as the ITTO's secretariat, considered it necessary to carry out an evaluation of the impact of the Decision. At that

[1] Review of Progress towards the Year 2000 Objective by Duncan Poore and Thang Hooi Chiew. Twenty-eighth International Tropical Timber Council Session of 24-30 May 2000, Lima, Peru.
[2] These three countries were also selected as case studies.

time ITTO's sum total expenditure for these missions was reported to be around US$2 million dollars[3]. Therefore, in the context of implementing strategic policy actions for the ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the years 2008-2009 [Decision 2(XLIII), paragraph 3(xii)], the Council decided to carry out "*a review and assessment of all the technical country diagnostic missions conducted; in assessing in-depth, the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of such missions on the basis of six case studies in countries to be selected in consultation with the Executive Director; and in proposing measures to improve the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of these missions, including effective follow-up implementation actions by the respective member countries*".

1.2 Methodology

The methodology applied for this review of ITTO DMs has been based on the detailed terms of reference prepared by ITTO (Annex 1). Only DMs completed up to 2007 (20 DMs) were included in the review. The data and corresponding analysis that were used to accomplish this review are:

1. ITTO antecedents regarding the DMs.
2. ITTO terms of reference for the DMs.
3. Methodical quantified review of key elements of 20 DMRs.
4. Answers to a questionnaire (Questionnaire A) sent to 20 team leaders of DMs and additional comments from most of them.
5. Answers to a questionnaire (Questionnaire B) sent to around 60 consultants that were members of the DMs and additional comments from some of them.
6. Answers to a questionnaire (Questionnaire C) including a report on acceptance and implementation of DM recommendations, sent to 20 national forestry governmental agencies and additional comments.
7. Development of case studies in 6 representative countries prepared by national experts and complemented by a mission of international experts and specific consultations with corresponding DM team leaders.
8. Review of projects proposed by the 20 countries to ITTO since the DM was carried out and their current status.

Two international consultants[4] (three months each) and six national consultants[5] (for the case studies) were appointed to carry out the work, and 14 additional local consultants were to be recruited for a very short period to assist the governmental agencies to fulfill the country questionnaires. The work formally commenced in August 2008 and was to be fully concluded in February 2009. Considering delays to appoint all consultants and to obtain a reasonable number of answers to the country questionnaires, the bulk of the work was carried out from October 2008 to January 2009 and the overall analysis and report writing had to be extended until May 2009.

The review of ITTO antecedents and terms of reference (items 1 and 2) regarding the DMRs were aimed at obtaining two sets of information: (1) the rationale and viability of the ITTO objective pursued through the DMs as expressed through their terms of reference and; (2) the extent to which the DMs followed and applied the essence of these terms of reference.

Both international experts, based on a previously agreed format, reviewed each DMR independently (item 3). The results were tabulated in order to check:

1. Consistency of the results with the ITTO terms of reference for the DMs.
2. Mission's focus and use of analytical tools.
3. The extent to which the identified constraints can be considered "the limiting or critical" factor or constraint to SFM and, especially, their effective prioritization.
4. Correspondence and consistency of the identified critical constraints or factors with proposed actions to remove the constraints.
5. Number and category of policy, action and project recommendations
6. Fulfillment of specific ITTO requisites for the DM:

[3]Not considering local costs for the host country or ITTO internal costs.
[4]Marc J. Dourojeanni (Peru) and Willy Delvingt (Belgium).
[5]Georges NGasse (Central African Republic), Angelique Loukondo (deceased during her assignment) and Basile Mpati (Congo), Hour Limchhun (Cambodia), Dody Sukadri (Indonesia), Cecilia do Prado (Brazil) and Dimas Arcia (Panama).

   a. Discussion with ministers and senior officers.
   b. Participation of stakeholders: meetings with forest managers and representatives of the timber trade, NGOs, civil society, indigenous and traditional peoples, etc.
   c. Field visits.
   d. Dissemination of results.
   e. Formal aspects of the DMRs.
7. Identification of project opportunities for ITTO and other donors, and their consistency with the intent of removing critical constraints to SFM.

Brief questionnaires (items 4 and 5) were separately addressed to the DM team leaders and to their members. Both questionnaires (A and B) are very similar, except for questions such as usefulness and quality of the inputs of local consultants, emphasis on aspects related to mission size and composition, required time and arrangements previous to the mission.

The opinion of the governmental forestry agencies of the countries that were benefited was expected to be the main source of information about the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of the DMs (item 6). A high percentage of implementation of a DM's recommendations would be a key indicator of effectiveness. As visits or specific detailed questionnaires were not feasible considering the means and the time available for the evaluation, it was decided to apply a general questionnaire (Questionnaire C) to all countries. The questionnaire section on acceptance and implementation of the DM recommendations was the subject of a specific brief report in each country. To ensure a representative percentage of answers, the ITTO appointed local consultants to assist the Governments to respond to the questionnaire. The questionnaire focused on information on the status of the application of the most relevant recommendations made. If the recommendations were partially implemented or not implemented at all, it was expected to receive in addition a short explanation of the reasons, if any, for not implementing them.

To complement the previously mentioned sources of information, six case studies (item 7) were developed in countries selected as representative samples of regions, languages, relevance of their forest estate, country size, time elapsed since the DM and willingness to be used as a case study. Of all criteria, time elapsed since the corresponding DM has been considered key with regard to country's implementation of recommendations. It was established that only DMs which were at least four years old (2001-2004) be considered. This was decided despite the fact that there is a serious inherent difficulty at making evaluation of DMs carried out 4 or more years ago. There is neither common nor precise memory nor knowledge of the facts and context. Actors are not the same and policy context is often very different. However, considering time requisites to implement most recommended policy reforms, a 4 or more year perspective was recognized as indispensable. DMs were carried out in thirteen (13) countries from 2001 to 2004. A preliminary selection indicated that in Africa only Central African Republic and Congo fulfilled this condition. In Asia and the Pacific, DMs were carried out in four countries up to 2004: Cambodia, Fiji Indonesia and the Philippines. In Latin America, seven countries had DMs conducted four or more years ago: Brazil, Ecuador, Guyana, Panama, Peru, Suriname and Trinidad and Tobago. Considering that some of these DMs had the same team leader and taking account of ITTO's comments and consultations with each country's government, the selected countries were: Congo (2001), Central African Republic (2002), Indonesia (2001), Cambodia (2004), Brazil (2001) and Panama (2004).

The review of projects proposed to ITTO (item 8) by the countries benefited by DMs was undertaken to evaluate their response to one of the main objectives of the DMs.

The main purpose of the case studies has been to obtain information that can illustrate and better explain results obtained with the other tools (questionnaires, analysis of the DMRs) used for the assessment. A national consultant in each country was appointed prior to the visit of the international consultants. On the basis of specific terms of reference they prepared a draft report containing detailed information on the follow-up given to the DM, particularly aiming at specifying the degree of acceptance and implementation of the policy and action recommendations or proposals by the government or other stakeholders, including project proposals to ITTO and other donors. The national consultants' reports were finished immediately after the visit of the international experts. The international consultants jointly or separately[6] performed visits to the country's authorities and other

[6] Dourojeanni and Delvingt jointly performed visits to Indonesia and Cambodia. Delvingt visited Congo and the Central African Republic while Dourojeanni visited Brazil and Panama.

stakeholders to complement and confirm the information contained in the national consultant draft report. Their conclusions were often different from the official perspective usually contained in the national consultants reports, based on: (1) interviews with governmental officers; (2) analysis and discussion of the result of the work of the national consultant; (3) comments and perspectives of interviewed stakeholders not related nor depending on the government; and (4) review of relevant documents about the current situation of SFM in the country.

This ambitious and delicate evaluation had to be developed with very limited means. Two international consultants engaged for a three-month period have integrated the basic team. Six national consultants, engaged for less than one month each, were appointed to develop the case studies and to assist the international consultants in their own countries. In addition, 14 local consultants received a symbolic amount of money to provide assistance to the government to complete the country's questionnaire and to briefly explain the level of implementation of the recommendations.

The core question of this review is clearly related to effectiveness and its main expression is the extent to which the recommendations of the DMs in each country were implemented. All other aspects, such as acceptance of the recommendations and quality or methodology of the reports, become largely irrelevant if the recommendations are applied. Of course, application of recommendations is not per se a proof of success. It is conceivable that the adopted recommendation may have failed in terms of the expected result or, also, that the adoption of the recommendation may not be directly related to the DM. But, this assessment was unable to go so far and restricted itself mostly to measure the effectiveness of the DMs in terms of the implementation of recommendations by concerned stakeholders.

Readers may notice some information in different chapters that does not seem to match. This is especially the case of the number of recommendations in each country since the author's recount of recommendations differs from the recount made by national consultants and governments.

2. Results

2.1 Results from questionnaires to consultants

Table 2. Summary of answers to questionnaires A (Team leaders) and B (consultants) in percent

Summarized questions	Quest. A		Quest. B	
	Yes	Not	Yes	Not
ITTO terms of reference: Realistic, viable?	56	44	73	27
Pre-mission communications: Effective?	56	44	68	32
Local arrangements for the mission: Adequate?	75	25	91	9
Technical information: Available?	56	44	68	32
Relevant stakeholders: Previously informed?	40	60	68	32
Forestry authorities: Easy access?	63	37	64	36
Non forestry authorities: Adequate access?	40	60	36	64
Number of consultants in the team: Adequate?	81	19	86	14
Team member qualifications: Adequate?	88	12	82	18
Time allocation for the mission: Adequate?	75	25	50	50
Language: A difficulty?	25	75	14	86
ITTO support: Adequate?	94	6	86	14
Opportunity to provide inputs for team member's selection?	56	44	N/A	
Contribution of national consultant: Good enough?	69	31	N/A	
Real governmental endorsement of the Diagnostic Mission?	50	50	60	40
Government implementation of policy proposals?	18	82	29	71
Political capacity of the forestry sector to adopt policy proposals?	57	43	36	64
Government implementation of action proposals?	31	69	22	78
Did the government prepare and submit ITTO's proposed projects?	31	69	60	40
Did the government prepare and submit projects to other donors?	27	73	40	60
Sharing and validation of results: Has it been possible?	21	79	25	75

Note: * In this summary the answers "not" and "not quite" were added. The full answer's statistics are included in Annexes.

The questionnaires sent to around 80 consultants received 38 answers (48%). The proportion of answers from team leaders (Questionnaire A) was much higher (80%) than the answers from other team members (37%). The relatively reduced proportion of answers is due to the time elapsed since many of the DMs were carried out and to out-of-date electronic addresses. As several consultants stated, they felt uneasy in making comments because they have not maintained contact with the country. Table 2 presents a summary of the answers to the main questions of questionnaires A and B.

2.1.1 Viability of the terms of reference

The team leaders were somewhat critical about the ITTO terms of reference as 44% of them considered these were "not" or "not quite" realistic or truly viable "*considering time and resources limitations*". The authors did not consider as significant the differences between "not" and "not quite" for the purpose of this evaluation. However, at the level of the team leaders the "not" responses were significantly more than the "not quite". Seventy three percent of the team members considered that the terms of reference were adequate. This is logical as their role in the mission is restricted to their specialty.

Most additional comments (in the questionnaires or in special communications) of team leaders and team members related to the DMs' terms of reference (Annex 2), clearly coinciding in the following deficiencies: (1) the ToRs are extremely broad or not focused, contradicting their overall apparent intention of emphasizing key problems or issues; (2) the ToRs lead to the description of important areas of SFM which are not really problem oriented; (3) the generic ToRs may seem convenient *vis a vis* ITTO Objective 2000, but that is so only in terms of the goal and should be tailored to the concerned country context and take note of emerging issues and; (4) the ToRs would be more effective if previously consulted and coordinated with key mission members. Some of these comments were also made by consultants that responded "yes" in questionnaires A and B. The need of detailed country-specific ToRs agreed by all parties was mentioned by several respondents and complemented by a suggestion to select team members with regard to this.

2.1.2 Mission organization and execution

Pre-mission communications and arrangements were considered satisfactory by 68% of the consultants, but only by 56% of the team leaders. Regarding technical information required prior to the visit or at mission's arrival, 68% of the consultants stated it was available; but only 56% of the team leaders were fully satisfied with the provided information. The percentage of unsatisfied respondents is high, considering the key importance of this matter. Complaints regarding the level of information of national stakeholders about the mission's goal are even higher. Over 60% of the team leaders considered the local stakeholders to be unaware of the objectives of the DM. However, 68% of other mission members were satisfied with the level of awareness of stakeholders.

Mission's access to national forestry authorities and stakeholders has been estimated as adequate by 63% of the team leaders and by 64% of the consultants. But, regarding access to discussions with high level policy-makers not directly related to the forestry sector (i.e. legislators, or finance, planning or agriculture ministers) 60% of the team leaders and 64% of the consultants declared that this kind of opportunities has not been available. Additional comments refer to the importance of contacting leaders of the opposition parties, especially when election processes are taking place at the same time as the mission. Other comments mention serious obstacles created by national authorities for the DM to contact specific stakeholders, such as activists or combative NGOs and personalities and, especially in Africa, to contact Asian logging concessionaires.

Language was not regarded as a serious barrier for the DMs. However, 25% of the team leaders complained about consultants not being able to follow conversations in official languages, even in locally accented English. In addition, several leaders mentioned as a very serious difficulty the limited translation capability of national consultants when dealing with local languages such as those used in rural areas of Asia and Africa, during field visits.

2.1.3 Missions organization and ITTO

This section refers to DM organization and composition that are mostly related to ITTO, including number of mission members, composition and selection of consultants, time allocation and ITTO

support. Regarding the number of members in the DMs the majority (81% and 86%) of the consultants considered that it was adequate for the task. However, several specialties were mentioned as necessary in the teams, depending on the country. The most often mentioned "needed" professionals were economists (macro-economists), tropical silviculturalists and social scientists, especially anthropologists specialized in rural communities and in African land tenure issues. Personal qualifications of the team members were considered adequate by more than 80% of the respondents of both questionnaires. Nevertheless, several complained about the lack of tropical experience of some of the international consultants or/and their capacity to express themselves in ITTO official languages. Satisfaction of team leaders with local consultants has been lower (69%) but still quite positive. Many team leaders highlighted the key contributions of these professionals to the success of the DMs.

Fifty-six percent of the team leaders reported not having had any opportunity to provide input for the selection of their teams. Many claim not even receiving a copy of the curriculum vitae of the members of their mission, resulting in professionally unbalanced teams.

Time allocation for the entire DM and, especially, for the field mission, has been a matter of great concern. Twenty-five percent of the team leaders and 50% of the consultants considered time allocation insufficient for the field mission. Suggested figures vary from one additional week up to three months in the country. The need for more time spent in the field, visiting forests, communities, enterprises and industries, was also mentioned. But several team leaders, including those who considered time allocation adequate in the questionnaire, indicated the need to consider organizing these missions in a very different way, including two or three visits to the country: one for preparation; another for the mission itself; and a final one for validation and monitoring. Most respondents mentioned the usefulness of a pre-mission.

The support received from ITTO's secretariat was considered adequate by around 90% of the respondents. However, several team leaders argued for the benefit of the presence of ITTO officers during the pre-mission and especially during the presentation of the results in the country. A few also expressed the need for ITTO secretariat to review in detail the draft DMR and to discuss its findings with team leaders and relevant mission members before final approval.

2.1.4 Apparent response of the national authorities with regard to the Diagnostic Mission's objectives

The important question "*In your opinion… did the government really endorse the mission's report?*" got mixed answers. Fifty percent of the team leaders declared they felt that the governmental authorities did "not" or "not quite" endorse their report. Forty percent of the consultants had the same impression. A very large number of additional comments provided by team leaders and consultants emphasize this key issue, expressing the feeling that national forestry authorities were not interested in the DM findings or results. Most consultants considered the governments had a previously taken decision regarding forest policy and were not willing to make any change. In many countries, as respondents explain, this attitude intends to highlight protection of forest cover, because deforestation rate is a political embarrassment.

Other questions related to the implementation of the recommendations received a moderate number of abstentions among team leaders (10%) and consultants (15%), based on the fact that they have not maintained contact with the countries. However, those that answered indicate that they do not consider the DMs were successful with regard to implementation of their policy or action recommendations. The question related to the implementation of the key policy proposals received a voluminous 82% negative answer ("not" and "not quite") from team leaders and an equally considerable 71% negative answer from consultants. Most interesting is the declaration by team leaders and consultants that the country's forestry sector may not have the capacity to implement their policy proposals, a situation accepted by 43% of the team leaders and by 64% of the consultants. Team leaders (69%) and consultants (78%) considered that the countries were not effective at implementing action proposals. A majority of the team leaders (69%) but less consultants (40%) considered the countries did not or did "not quite" prepare and submit recommended projects to ITTO.

2.1.5 Sharing and validation of the mission results

An ample majority of the team leaders (79%) and consultants (75%) considered they had no real opportunity nor enough time and resources to share and validate the results of the DM with stakeholders in order to facilitate the comprehension, acceptance and subsequent implementation of the recommendations.

In countries where the three ITTO official languages are not commonly used, such as Thailand, Cambodia and Brazil, the lack of translation of the DMR into the local language has been a very serious limitation for dissemination of results. Apparently only Indonesia has made a full translation and printing as well as an ample dissemination of the report.

Many additional comments pointed out the need of 3 to 5 year DM's follow-up by key members of the team and/or a full DM ex-post evaluation around 5 years after, in order to assist and consolidate the application of the recommendations.

2.2 Results from questionnaires to the country's forest authorities and implementation of recommendations

In theory, the principal source of information to assess the DMs should have been the authorities of the benefited countries. This has not been the case and, in spite of the appointment of local consultants chosen by the authorities to assist them to complete the questionnaire, only 11 countries responded to the questionnaire and 15 completed the questionnaire's section on acceptance and implementation of DM recommendations. In addition, as it is possible to deduce from answers received to the questionnaire, most were completed only as a formality. Several factors explain this fact. Two are conspicuous: (1) most current forest authorities were not in place during DM's execution and have little or no knowledge about it and; (2) national authorities prefer to show satisfaction about received collaboration from international organizations The limited interest of most countries regarding this aspect of the assessment was evident considering that the appointment of local consultants to be proposed by governments to assist them to fulfill the questionnaire C, planned to be finished in September 2008, was still ongoing in mid February 2009. However, the section on recommendations produced interesting information.

2.2.1 National forest authorities' concept on the Diagnostic Missions

Table 3 presents the results of the questionnaire C. They show, in general terms, that the country forest authorities were very satisfied with the DMs, especially as related to opportune mission announcement, team qualifications, time allocation, ITTO support, knowledge improvement and language issues. Their evaluation is also fully positive concerning the adequacy of ITTO's terms of reference. The highest grade obtained refers to the applicability of policy options offered by the DM. The question regarding national authority's overall level of satisfaction with the DM attained a very high grade.

Table 3. Summary of answers to questionnaire C (country's forestry authority)

Summarized questions	Yes	No	Not quite	N/I
Mission announcement made in due form and on due time?	9	-	1	1
ITTO terms of reference: Adequate?	9	-	1	1
In-country DM time allocation: Adequate? Sufficient?	7	1	2	1
Were qualifications of the team of experts adequate or satisfactory?	10	-	-	1
Did the DM conduct enough consultation with stakeholders?	6	2	2	1
Was language a difficulty for communication during the DM?	-	8	2	1
Was ITTO support adequate for successful execution of the DM?	8	1	1	1
Were preliminary results of the DM discussed in the country?	6	2	2	1
Do you consider the DM, as carried out, a useful tool for improvement of SFM in your country?	6	-	3	1
Did the DM improve your knowledge about SFM in your country?	8	1	2	-
Did the DM offer applicable policy options to improve SFM?	10		1	-
Did the DM offer a readily applicable set of actions?	6	1	4	-
Do you consider the DM submitted proposals or suggestions as innovative, attractive and feasible under local reality?	5	-	6	-
Is the DMR being used by governmental staff and other stakeholders for planning and other future actions?	3	2	6	-

Have you submitted any ITTO project proposed by the DM?	7	1	1	2
Are there unacceptable recommendations in the DM?	3	6	1	1
Do you consider the DM contributed to a better understanding of ITTO's role?	7	2	2	-
Are you, as national authority, satisfied with the overall result of the DM?	8	1	1	1
Did you have an opportunity and time to validate the results of the DM with stakeholders to facilitate implementation?	5	3	3	-
Note: N/I, in this case, means "no information" or "I do not know".				

The aspects that were not considered at the same high level were those related to in-country preliminary discussion of the DM findings and, similarly, a majority of the respondents clearly manifested they had no opportunity or means to validate the results of the DM with the stakeholders. Low grades were also given to the applicability of the set of actions proposed, contrasting with their own perception that the policy recommendations were viable. Interestingly, the authorities did not consider the DM recommendations were truly innovative, attractive or feasible under the local reality. However, the lowest grade has been attributed to the question "*Is the DMR being used by governmental staff and other stakeholders for planning and other future actions?*" Only 3 out of 11 responded positively, 2 answered it was not used and 6 answered "not quite".

The answers to this questionnaire will be discussed later but it is obvious that some of them are inconsistent. As an example: How can there be satisfaction with the DM's results if it is simultaneously expressed that the proposals were not innovative nor being used for planning or future actions?

2.2.2 Number and proportion of accepted and implemented recommendations

The questionnaire C was accompanied by a form to analyze the level of acceptance and implementation of recommendations made by the DMs. The national consultants appointed on suggestion of the governments provided the information contained in Tables 4 and 5. The total number of recommendations registered by local consultants in several countries is not the same as accounted by the authors on the basis of their own reading of the DMRs. This is a consequence of the lack of clear differentiation between suggestions and recommendations in several reports and their variable level of encapsulation of recommendations. This allowed each user of the reports to apply his/her own criterion. Anyhow, as visible in table 5 most recommendations (84%) were fully accepted by governments. The proportion of partially accepted recommendations is 11%. Only 5% of the DM recommendations were rejected. However, considering that some local consultants mixed up "rejected" recommendations with "delayed" recommendations the rejection rate may be as high as 7%.

Table 4. Acceptance of DM recommendations

Country	Fully accept	Partial accept.	Rejected	**Total**
Central African Republic	26	0	1	**27**
Congo	23	1	0	**24**
Liberia	23	0	0	**23**
Nigeria	3	1	0	**4**
Cambodia	27	6	3	**36**
Indonesia	39	10	0	**49**
Papua New Guinea	21	0	0	**21**
Philippines	33	0	0	**33**
Thailand	46	5	0	**51**
Brazil*	15	11	7	**33**
Ecuador	8	3	3	**14**
Guyana	30	3	1	**34**
Mexico	45	1	0	**46**
Panama	27	12	5	**44**
Suriname	37	2	4	**43**
Total	**403**	**55**	**24**	**482**
Note: * incorporated recommendations.				

Table 5. Level of implementation of accepted DM recommendations				
Country	Fully implem.	Partial implem.	Being implem.	**Total**
Central African Republic	6	8	5	7
Congo	1	4	18	1
Liberia	3	8	0	12
Nigeria	0	3	1	5
Cambodia	15	6	9	3
Indonesia	14	23	8	3
Papua New Guinea	0	16	0	5
Philippines	0	0	24	0
Thailand	15	12	22	2
Ecuador	0	7	0	4
Brazil	5	21	0	0
Guyana	13	3	17	0
Mexico	1	8	35	0
Panama	0	13	24	2
Suriname	0	1	35	0
Total	**73**	**133**	**198**	**45**

The level of implementation of DM recommendations is variable from country to country. As seen in Table 5 full implementation was attributed to only 16% of the accepted recommendations. However, six countries admit not having been able to fully implement any recommendation. Most (74%), independently of the time elapsed since the DM, are still being implemented (44%) or were only partially implemented (30%). Around 10% were delayed.

It must be underlined that all recommendations are not of equivalent "value". Some aim at important, complex changes while others are much simpler, apparently easy to apply. Thus, statistics on implementation of recommendations are not entirely representative of the success of the DM as the application as one single "important" recommendation may be more significant than several "minor" fully implemented recommendations. It was obviously impossible for the authors to classify the 600 or more recommendations produced according to their importance for each country and situation.

2.2.3 Classification and quantification of the reasons/factors for lack of implementation of recommendations

In Africa the most frequent answer provided by forest authorities to explain why accepted recommendations are still "delayed", "being implemented" or "partially implemented" has been lack of funding or budgetary constraints and, also, lack of experts in the field. In Asia and Latin America but also in Africa, a multiplicity of other reasons and factors, mostly pertaining to political and legal particularities of each country, are mentioned. These explanations directly contradict the very high number of positive answers made to the question "*Did the DM offer applicable policy options to improve SFM?*" In the case of the "partially implemented recommendations" the most commonly cited reason is that some other factors were not duly considered or have changed after the mission, making it unnecessary or irrelevant to fully apply the original recommendation.

2.3 Results from case studies

The six case studies (Brazil, Cambodia, Congo, Central African Republic, Indonesia and Panama) revealed a number of details about the DMs that other instruments of this assessment were unable to detect. Despite the fact that all case studies were supposed to follow the same methodology, their results are not fully comparable due to the different approaches of the DMs, the kind of responses of national authorities to the assessment and the variable ability of the national consultant to get official and non-official responses, as well as to interpret the information received. Most national consultants were closely associated to the national forestry authorities and, to a large extent, represented their views. This is why, in most cases, the interpretation of the international consultants on the same matters has been significantly different.

2.3.1 General opinion on the Diagnostic Missions

Usefulness of the DM. The responses to this question in the three continents were divergent in appearance but similar in essence. In both Asian countries almost every interviewed person,

independently of being government officers, private sector managers, NGO members or international assistance staff, expressed that the DMs were "useful" or "very useful" to improve SFM in the country. However, in Indonesia usefulness was specifically linked to the fact that the DM "*collected and organized pre-existing ideas and proposals and propelled them to higher levels of decision-making, facilitating their adoption*". In Cambodia, where the report has barely been used the expression "useful" remained unexplained. In general, the authors concluded that interviewees have used the term "useful" much more as a polite and non-compromising answer rather than responding to concrete evidence of usefulness. Another measure of usefulness of the DMR could be provided by its use as a reference for planning. It seems clear that the Indonesian DMR has indeed been used to some extent as one among various planning tools. It has been fully translated into Indonesian and published and it is still visible in the bookcases of some offices. This was not the case in Cambodia, where neither translation nor distribution was made.

Contrary to the responses to this question obtained in Asia, in Brazil and Panama every interviewee expressed clearly that the DM was "*useless*"*.* Most of them added that they never saw the report, that the report is not even in the files of their institutions and that they had no idea that such a mission was ever carried out. In Brazil, the DMR was not translated into Portuguese, nor published or ever used as a source of information for further planning. It has been literally ignored. Other stakeholders were less radical in their answers but anyhow they manifested their absolute ignorance about the report. There are, of course, several reasons for such a situation that will be discussed later.

In Africa the case studies revealed an intermediate situation. Again, most interviewees mentioned the usefulness of "*that kind of mission*" and, especially, manifested their appreciation for ITTO support but, indeed, avoided specific mentions of the DMs. The DMRs were unknown by current staff of forestry institutions and consulted stakeholders.

Improvement of knowledge and perspectives. There is consensus among interviewees in Asia, Africa and Latin America that the DMs did not contribute "*to improve the local knowledge and perspectives on the country SFM condition*". The main reason for this result is that since the Tropical Forest Action Plan was carried out several equivalent exercises were replicated in almost every country, in general with consistent and often coordinated international support. These kinds of studies were available very shortly before or after the inception of the DMs to Cambodia, Brazil and Panama. However, it is possible that some DMRs were a source of updated information when released, complementing other sources which may have represented a different approach.

Origin of recommendations. It is very difficult to identify the origin of the recommendations made by the DMs, especially in the case of those that were successfully applied: "*Good results always have several fathers*". However, as previously stated, it is consensus among interviewed stakeholders or actors during the six case studies that almost every recommendation was a locally pre-existing idea[7].

Innovation. The application of the concept of "innovation" with regard to solutions or recommendations is an excessively difficult matter to evaluate. It can be analyzed from three different perspectives: (1) the *status quo* or state of the art in the country at the time of the DM; (2) the intelligent adaptation to the country's reality of already known solutions or situations in other countries; and (3) the intrinsic originality of the propositions. Most recommendations in the DMs were relatively innovative with regard to the first perspective but there is unanimous opinion among interviewees that only a very limited portion of the reports' proposals, if any, was truly innovative. As someone pointed out "*there is nothing really new below the sun*" regarding tropical forestry. On the other hand, this fact is not inherently wrong. To identify good ideas, especially when these are of a local origin, and to sustain and promote them is a duty of international consultancy. ITTO reports backing and echoing local ideas or initiatives provide better opportunities to have them finally approved or adopted.

Applicability of policy and action recommendations. Most DM recommendations were considered applicable and realistic by government officers and other stakeholders, justifying their acceptance by governments.

[7] A good example of this is in Indonesia, where the establishment of a National Forestry Council was proposed several years before the DM was carried out. There are some other DM recommendations for Indonesia that were already considered even in the (by then) existing forest legislation but not yet implanted at that time.

Under-considered issues and recommendations. Despite the fact that most interviewees commented that the DMs produced too many recommendations, including some of little relevance, in Asian and African countries they were also criticized by the national stakeholders for not considering enough or not considering at all very important issues such as land tenure, protected areas, wildlife management, forestry financing and carbon fixation economic potential or options to take advantage of the CDM (Clean Development Mechanism).

Opportunity of the DMs. It has been mentioned that the programming of the DMs must consider the appropriate political timing[8]. Real interests of the country's authorities, governments being inaugurated and periods of policy reform are some particularly important windows of opportunity for a DM to be successful. DMs must not be programmed as ordinary, routine operations. In addition, several interviewees indicated that DM members must be selected with greater consideration to their knowledge and experience of the country's reality. The team leader must be a highly respected personality with capacity to interact at the highest levels of government.

Improvement of understanding ITTO´s work and role. ITTO was already well known in the six countries selected for case studies at DMs inception. The DMs, in the context of ITTO's role worldwide, seem to have been a somehow collateral contribution to the understanding of its work.

Dissemination/diffusion. It came to the authors' knowledge that most if not all DMs were unable to disseminate their findings and recommendations. It has been suggested that it would be particularly useful if the missions spent a few additional days in the country explaining to central and regional authorities the results of the work. Translation into the national language and making DMRs available in booklets as well as by internet has also been consistently mentioned as indispensable in Indonesia, Cambodia and Brazil. Even if it is the case that many forestry officers are able to express themselves in English, they consider it unfair to have to make the effort of reading something about their own countries written in foreign languages. Additionally, their own translation capability is not enough for a truly good interpretation of the text. Some DMRs were also considered too long and their summaries not clear enough as to be properly understood and used by stakeholders.

2.3.2 Number and proportion of accepted and implemented recommendations

There was a generalized feeling among interviewed stakeholders, especially in Indonesia, Cambodia, Brazil and Panama that DM recommendations (and sub-recommendations) were far too numerous and unequally relevant to be applied and adequately followed up. It seems evident that the DMs were somehow under pressure from their own members and/or from national stakeholders to include recommendations that, in the context, became non-essential. Recommendations of some DMRs (Cambodia, Brazil) were considered especially unclear as it has been difficult for the users to differentiate between suggestions, alternatives and recommendations. The Brazilian DMR included almost all its formal recommendations as actions to be developed as projects to be submitted to ITTO.

Level of acceptance of recommendations. Most DM recommendations (92%) were declared as accepted by governments (Table 6). However, 20% of accepted recommendations were declared as "partially" accepted. The meaning of "partially" accepted has been very variable among countries and interviewees. In some cases it meant a minor element of the recommendation.

Table 6. Level of acceptance of DM recommendations in country case studies

Country	**Total**	Fully	Partially	**Accept**	**Reject**
Central African Republic	**27**	26	0	**26**	1
Congo	**24**	23	1	**24**	0
Cambodia	**36**	27	6	**33**	3
Indonesia	**49**	39	10	**49**	0
Brazil*	**33**	15	11	**26**	7
Panama	**44**	27	12	**39**	5
Total	**213**	**157**	**40**	**197**	**16**
Note: * Recommendations were "incorporated".					

[8]The Indonesian DM was benefited by extraordinarily favorable conditions, coinciding with a fruitful period of political renovation, including a new democracy and an unprecedented process of decentralization.

In the case of Brazil the recommendations were not officially accepted. However, the national forestry authorities recognize that many of the recommendations of the DM were de facto "incorporated"[9] and to some extent implemented because the DM proposal coincided with those included in national planning instruments. Therefore, it is claimed by national authorities that there is no cause-effect relation with the DM.

Level of implementation of recommendations. The level of implementation of DM recommendations was qualified as "fully", "partially" (part of the recommendation was fully applied but another part was delayed or not applied), "being implemented", "delayed" (not applied but not discarded) and "not implemented" (probably discarded). Even considering such a categorization it is extremely difficult to state the true level of implementation of the DMs recommendations. In a few cases, recommendations have been obviously applied but in most cases, specific or localized and partial actions are mentioned as evidence of some degree of "implementation", especially when respondents are closely linked to the government. When actions carried out are compared with the objective of a recommendation, it becomes doubtful whether the recommendation was indeed applied. The concept of "being implemented" is also difficult to accept when a much longer than required period for implementation has already elapsed. However, some recommendations are obviously of the "never ending" type, such as most training or research needs. On the other hand, it was frequently observed that DM's original recommendations were substantially modified during the process of their application, often as a response to a changing environment. In some cases only the intention remains the same.

The results for Indonesia (percentages based on Table 7) show that according to official reports 29% of the accepted recommendations were "fully implemented" while the consultants considered only 10% as such. In Cambodia the divergence is radical, as official sources show 45% of recommendations as "fully implemented" whereas the consultants' view is that none can be considered fully applied. In Africa the situation is similar to Asia, with a relatively low level of official recognition of fully implemented recommendations (4% in the Congo) and an apparently better performance in CAR but, an even lower estimate by the international consultant, except in the case of the Congo where the his evaluation considers two fully implemented recommendations instead of one. In Latin America the governments themselves acknowledge a very low level of fully implemented recommendations, including none as in the case of Panama.

Table 7. Level of implementation of accepted DM recommendations in country case studies

Country	Total number accepted recs.	Level of implementation							
		Fully		Partially		Being implemented		Delayed or not implemented**	
		NC	IC	NC	IC*	NC	IC	NC	IC
CAR	**26**	6	3	8	11	5	-	7	13
Congo	**24**	1	2	4	21	18	-	1	1
Cambodia	**33**	15	0	6	21	9	-	3	12
Indonesia	**49**	14	5	23	36	8	-	4	8
Brazil***	**26**	5	-	21	-	0	-	0	-
Panama	**39**	0	0	13	29	24	-	2	10
Total	**197**	**41**		**75**		**64**		**17**	

Notes. **NC** : National consultant, **IC**: International consultants
*The counting of the ICs does not differentiate between "partially" and "being implemented". **The difference between "delayed" and "not implemented" is not evident. The IC prefers the concept of "not implemented" as reasons for "delayed" are often not obvious. *** No independent (IC) counting was made

By government accounts the average percentage of fully implemented recommendations is 21%. This result is reduced to a meager 6% by the international consultants' evaluation (excluding Brazil, due to the previously mentioned fact). Most recommendations, by both analyses, are considered "partially implemented" or "being implemented" (63% to 69%). And, the percentage of not implemented recommendations is as high as 26% by the international consultants' evaluation.

[9]The difference between the words "accepted" and "incorporated" in the context of this assessment is not semantic. They recommendations were not accepted as the government did not acknowledge them. However, several of the recommendations were coincidentally equivalent to those the government was considering to apply or applying. Thus, the term "incorporation" is technically equivalent but politically different.

It may be argued that the international consultants, considering their very brief mission in each country, have had no real capacity or arguments to diverge so significantly from the official response to the level of "full implementation" of the recommendations. However, they based their evaluation strictly on the responses of the personally interviewed stakeholders, including government officers and industry or forest enterprise owners, staff of international agencies and NGOs based in the country. The reading of up to date documents and papers on the forestry situation of each country was only a complement. As an example, there is an evident problem when a country declares "full implementation" of a recommendation about efficient supervision of a few large logging concessions when there is simultaneously an official nation-wide logging ban implemented in the country and where there is not a single concession legally operational. Also, a "fully implemented" recommendation about reducing illegal logging is not credible when it is public knowledge that over 90% of the logs being produced are of illegal origin or when the local industry owners openly declare they continue their operations on the basis of "*log imports*" from neighbor countries where there are no productive forests or when, even themselves, recognize that their supply of logs is from fraudulent sources. Another example is a fulfilled recommendation to establish a "forest fund", which was indeed established several years ago but is still completely inoperative. These are only simple examples among many others, often less evident, which justify the different results between national and international consultant's figures. Anyhow, it is important to repeat that even by governmental accounts the level of full implementation of DMs recommendations has been a meager 21%.

Description of the recommendations. In several DMs the recommendations were considered far too general and imprecise[10] as to be readily applied. In others it is almost impossible to differentiate suggestions from recommendations. These facts created an additional difficulty in investigating the impact of the DMs, as a number of recommendations could be considered as fully or partially implemented because several non-related actions, possibly not even originated by the DM, contributed involuntarily to this situation.

Implementation and successful implementation. It is important to reiterate that recommendations considered as "implemented" may not mean their implementation has been successful or even less that its objectives were attained. The mission did not evaluate the quality of the implementation or the results of their application. Its responsibility was limited to assess the level of their implementation.

Correlation between DM's recommendations and implemented recommendations. The implementation of a DM recommendation, even though successful, is not *per se* a proof of DMs effectiveness. As stated, DM's recommendations were not fundamentally different from ideas and recommendations consigned in other documents made by national governmental and academic institutions as well as by several international organizations in addition to ITTO[11]. Therefore, many of the actions that are attributed to the DMs may also be attributed to other documents that happen to have the same or similar intention. For the same reason it is equally possible that some of the actions that correspond to DM's recommendations may have been adopted or appropriated by other actors or donors. Anyhow, some of the key recommendations were executed with assistance of these other agencies[12]. DMs reports are public documents and have had a reasonable distribution within the international donor community.

2.3.3 Number and proportion of recommended projects submitted to ITTO

In several of the DMs the description of the ITTO project proposals was only a "one line" title. This was clearly insufficient and may be a part of the explanation for the low level of government follow-up to DM's project proposals to ITTO.

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[10] Examples of these recommendations are: "*Measures have to be taken to allow the forest management capacities of the private sector and civil society*" or "*A significant expansion of community based approaches in a diversity of situations*" or "*Recognition that complex regulations will not eliminate corruption, on the contrary it may encourage corruption*". There is nothing wrong with these recommendations except that they fit well to almost every country.

[11] Several international and bilateral agencies finished an ample forestry sector analysis of Cambodia just before the beginning of the DM.

[12] In Indonesia, the GTZ and the EC are developing very important projects that are perfectly in line with key recommendations of the DM.

A common criticism of interviewees is that the DMRs do not even mention possible interventions or projects of other international donor agencies to implement recommendations. However, several DMs recommendations clearly require the intervention of multilateral or bilateral donors and financing agencies. ITTO has often required or invited other agencies to participate in DMs. However, the responses were much below expectation.

2.3.4 Factors or reasons explaining the above mentioned results

Most explanations provided by governments to justify the high percent of "partially or being implemented" recommendations are associated to budgetary or financial restrictions and to the lengthy procedures of their legislative and judiciary institutions. These explanations are a part of the so-called "*lack of political priority*". Many are also related to permanent conflicts with other sectors, such as agriculture and land titling. Especially land titling regularization is mentioned as a serious cause of delays; in part because it depends on other sectors that have no affinity with forestry and that usually favor agriculture expansion. Definition of the forest estate is also often limited by the unclear and politically sensitive issue of local or migrating population rights and by additional difficulties inherent to the documentation of such rights. The tropical forest estate definition is tinted everywhere by ideological and political debates that in the end benefit those that simply intrude in forests to carry out illegal logging associated or not with unplanned deforestation for agriculture.

A growing cause of difficulty to apply recommendations directly related to SFM is related to new, often exaggerate environmental, social or cultural requisites. In Panama and Brazil the forest management plans, even the most sophisticated ones, which fulfill the most demanding certification requisites, are requested to prepare redundant environmental impact assessments. This fact makes it much more difficult to make a forest plantation with exotic species on degraded land, or to sustainably manage a natural forest, than to clear-cut a thousand hectares of pristine forest to plant soybean or another industrial crop. It is also much more difficult and time consuming to establish a protected area, even privately owned, than to practice cattle ranching or agriculture in forest areas.

Of course, changes in government, decentralization efforts, economics, war and other forms of social unrest, are also mentioned in particular cases. Even in currently stable democratic countries such as Indonesia and Brazil there were numerous changes in the national forest administration since 2001. Each ministerial change, even when pertaining to the same government or political party, may be the cause of profound changes in organization and key staff. In Africa the changes are even more frequent and every change causes a serious loss of institutional memory. Decentralization is a process also going on in big nations such as Indonesia and Brazil and in medium or small countries such as Peru and Panama. Everywhere it is the cause of the same problems regarding SFM. The new regional or local authorities reclaim the control of their forest estate but are not prepared nor equipped to do so and, in addition, are not ready to respect national legislation and regulations. Though this may be a right move in the long term, in the short term it is the cause of an often chaotic situation that, obviously, negatively impacted on the application of DMs recommendations.

However, in some cases another underlying reason for not implementing DM recommendations is the lack of interest of forestry authorities themselves to make significant changes to the status quo. In other cases, such as in Panama, it is evident that the forestry sector, as organized today (divided in three parts, all three at low hierarchical levels) and fully submitted to a relatively powerful environmental sector, cannot assume control of its own future. These kinds of situations may explain why the DMs were more successful in countries where forestry is politically more important, such as Indonesia.

2.4 Results from the review of the Diagnostic Mission (DM) reports

The selected 20 DMRs were reviewed separately by both international consultants on the basis of a structured format. All DMRs are of very good quality. The DMs were made by the better known and most qualified tropical foresters of the world, including former leaders of world forestry institutions such as CIFOR and ITTO or heads of forestry affairs in institutions such as FAO and IUCN. There were also several former ministers or secretaries of forestry or environment, full professors of the best world class universities as well as exceptional and very well known international consultants. In addition, the DMRs were reviewed and approved by the ITTO.

Therefore, the so called “quality” analysis requested to the authors by ITTO was based on the examination of much above average standards for those kind of reports, including formal aspects (conciseness, comprehensiveness, organization of the report, adequacy of the summary, organization of the recommendations), methodology (approach, use of analytical tools, consideration to the terms of reference) and content (level of identification and prioritization of critical factors, correlation of identified critical factors with recommendations, description of the recommendations and their level of viability and innovation). It is obvious that the evaluation of several of these parameters, especially those related to the content, implies an unavoidably great deal of subjectivity. As an example, a recommendation can be considered innovative to some experts and not so to others and, the same proposal can be new for a country or situation and not for another. These kinds of relativities lead the authors to not assign much weigh to this part of the assessment. Nevertheless, when its results are combined with those from other elements of the evaluation they help to explain some of the issues detected.

2.4.1 Formal quality aspects

A first conclusion from the readings of the 20 DMRs is that each one has a peculiar format and structure, making it difficult to establish comparisons among them or to extract commonalities. This situation is even more acute with regard to the constraints or “most critical factors” and the recommendations. Both may be found accumulated at the end of the report or spread all over it. It has been estimated that half the reports could present the recommendations in a clearer way. In too many cases it is not possible to differentiate between general comments, suggestions and recommendations. Others made excessive use of the so-called “encapsulated” recommendations: a few macro-recommendations that seem to fit under ITTO terms of reference aiming at clear prioritization are amplified by dozens of “sub-recommendations” that are not prioritized.

Around 45% of the DMRs are too long (over 100 pages without annexes) and their summaries are not always (55%) as explicit and concise as expected. Several summaries exceeded 20 pages. In general, the description of the forestry situation of the country is good or even excellent but it is often excessively detailed, especially when considering that most interested parties (government, stakeholders, ITTO) are already aware of the facts that are available in other well-known documents.

2.4.2 Methodology and approach

ITTO suggested to the DMs the utilization of the subjects included in Criterion 1 of the National Level Criteria and Indicators (C&I) as a general guide for the work. ITTO highlighted that this was “only a suggestion” and that every aspect should not be considered in every case. Around 30% of the DMs made evident use of this tool. It seems that in a number of cases this involuntarily contributed to spread the identified critical factors, confusing their effective prioritization. A smaller percentage (20%) took advantage of analytical tools such as the “problem tree”. The main conclusion is that the quality of the analysis of the forestry problem of each country was not influenced by the use of the mentioned tools. DMRs that made no evident use of them developed equally good or even better analyses.

All DMs made use of the so called National Forestry Action Plans and other more recent equivalent exercises. These, prepared over a longer period of time and with much larger teams and means, had an understandable significant influence on DM’s determination of constraints and recommendations. In some cases these documents, somehow classical in their approach, may have been too influential on the DM results.

An important aspect in evaluating the DMs has been the amplitude of their approach. Some, a minority (especially the African DMs), have focused on a few carefully selected issues. But most Asian and all Latin American DMs utilized a very broad approach, considering a multiplicity of aspects. The second group quite often faced difficulties to target the so-called “most critical” factors.

Equally important is the fact that most reports duly considered and described, amid the critical constraints to SFM, those that are of a national, socioeconomic and policy nature, thus, not dependent upon the forestry sector (extra-sectoral factors) but which decisively influence it. However, few DMRs clearly prioritized them and even fewer made any recommendation that was not internal to the national forestry sector (intra-sectoral). Most policy-oriented recommendations in the DMRs are clearly intra-sectoral and they do not provide any option to confront the complex problematic that is usually summarized as “*lack of political priority for the forestry sector*” (i.e. political and budgetary support, financing, land tenure regulations, public administration inefficiency or corruption). This contradictory

fact is at the basis of a problem confirmed in the following section: the lack of correlation between the described and/or identified most critical factors and the proposed recommendations.

Additionally, the treatment of these extra-sectoral "most critical factors" was very different from report to report: Some DMRs did not mention them; others mentioned them but decided the report must not deal further with them and, other reports provided only very general recommendations. At this point it is also possible to conclude that, comprehensibly, most mission leaders made a voluntary decision not to deal directly in their reports with most key extra-sectoral constraints to SFM, with a relative exception for land tenure issues.

2.4.3 Number and categories of identified constraints and recommendations

Table 8. Summary statistics on recommendations

Recommendation type	Nbr.	%	Average/ country
Policy	248	49.4	12.4
Technical (mostly forestry)	121	24.1	6.1
Project proposals	133	26.5	6,6
Total	**502**	**100.0**	**25.1**
Total, including encapsulated	633		31.7

The three most important constraints cited in each one of the 20 DMRs and their corresponding recommendations can be roughly grouped in 18 categories, as shown in Table 10. Nine (9) out of the 18 categories of constraints included among the three top priorities were of a "policy" nature. The DMRs identified 49 policy priority constraints (82% of the priority constraints). The other 9 priority constraints were of a "technical" nature, but they accumulated only 11 mentions (18%).

The recommendations, as well as the constraints, correspond to three types: Policy proposals (49%), technical or action proposals (24%) and project proposals (27%). The total number of recommendations (Table 8) was 502 for the 20 countries and varied from a minimum of 6 to a maximum of 52. The average number of recommendations per DMR or country is 25. However, if considering "telescopic" or encapsulated recommendations or sub-recommendations included in the DMRs, the total number is 633, averaging 32 recommendations per country.

The so-called "policy" constraints and recommendations, as previously mentioned, can be intra-sectoral (Forest policy, legislation, planning, administration, relations with private sector and communities) and extra-sectoral (national policy and economics, social issues, land tenure, corruption, state inefficiency, war or political unrest, etc.). The 248 policy recommendations represented half of all proposed recommendations. Four (4) DMRs did not propose any policy recommendation but others proposed as many as 35. Three DMRs did not include any "technical" recommendations. In other words 7 DMRs (35%) emphasized only "policy" or only "technical" recommendations. There were also 133 project proposals for ITTO and very few for other donors, averaging 6 proposals per DMR and representing 27% of the recommendations made. Two DMRs did not propose any project but another proposed 14.

2.4.4 Priority categories of constraints and recommendations and their correlation

The five most frequently indicated subjects included among the three top priority constraints in the 20 DMRs (Table 9) were related to (1) forest policy, legislation and planning (18.3%); (2) forestry institutions' weaknesses (15.0%), (3) land tenure with regard to forestry (13.3%), (4) private sector role in forest management and industry, including capacity and awareness (11.7%) and; (5) national socio-political context (10.0%). Considering only the subjects of the two top priority constraints, the above mentioned tendency is reinforced, but land tenure issues jump to second place and the national socioeconomic-political context is upgraded to fourth place.

The five most often cited categories among the three priority recommendations were related to: (1) improvement of forest policy, legislation and planning (29.3%); (2) institutional strengthening (19.5%); (3) forest land tenure regularization and security for the forest estate and improvement of forest industry capacity and awareness (each with 9.8%); (4) improvement of information and transparency (7.3%); and (5) better inter-sectoral (inter-government and government-private) coordination. While 18 categories of most critical constraints were identified, only 14 subject categories are included among the three top priority recommendations in the 20 DMRs. Therefore, 6

of the identified priority constraints that are essentially of a "technical" nature did not receive a proportional priority among recommendations.

The preceding paragraph and Table 9 show that there is strong correlation between some of the identified categories of priority constraints and the proposed recommendations, such as in the case of "Forest policy, legislation and planning" and "Forest institutions weaknesses and strengthening". However, even among these categories there are surprising differences of numbers between priority constraints and recommendations. The category "Forest policy, legislation and planning" that was considered top priority constraint in only 18.3% of the reports received 29.3% of the recommendations. But, Table 9 also clearly demonstrates that other high priority constraints that were identified did not receive a corresponding equivalent number of recommendations. If considering only two instead of three top priority constraints and recommendations, the land tenure issues that were considered priority constraint in 17.1 % of the reports received only 10.3 equivalent priority recommendations. Regarding the "national socioeconomic and political context" the results show an even larger gap respectively with 12.2% and 3.4%. Around half of the DMRs were not able or not willing to clearly point out the "*factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of SFM in that country*". As mentioned previously these factors were, in general, rightly identified and described in the reports. However, they were not prioritized nor subjects of specific recommendations. Five DMRs failed in establishing any priority recommendation and, in one way or another, most reports also avoided a clear prioritization of recommendations. In general, the correlation between identified constraints and proposed recommendations is not good in half the categories. This important matter will be discussed again later.

Table 9. First three priority constraints and recommendations addressing them in the DMRs

Categories of constraints and recommendations	% Constr.	% Recom.
1. Forest policy, legislation and planning	18.3	29.3
2. Forest institutions weaknesses & strengthening	15.0	19.5
3. Land tenure issues related to SMF	13.3	9.8
4. National socioeconomic & political context	10.0	2.4
5. Private sector role enhancement, awareness & competitiveness	11.7	12.2
6. Forest management issues, mostly technical	5.0	-
7. Demand/supply gaps	5.0	-
8. Small contribution of the forestry sector, competitiveness	3.3	2.4
9. Education, information, transparency & coordination	3.3	12.2
10. Infrastructure (energy, transportation) & financing	3.3	4.8
11. Local communities issues	1.7	2.4
12. Illegal logging	1.7	2.4
13. Harvesting restrictions	1.7	-
14. Unequal forestry development	1.7	-
15. Forest plantations	1.7	2.4
16. Perceptions on conservation vs. use	1.7	-
17. Forest degradation & secondary forests management	1.7	-
18. Biodiversity conservation issues	-	2.4

The description of the recommendations has been considered very clear in 5 DMRs and barely sufficient in 9. The recommendations of the other 6 DMRs were far too general to make their application possible. As detected during the case studies, some recommendations were only statements that can fit to almost every country and situation. Other recommendations were included as very general suggestions.

Also noticeable is the fact that "social forestry or community forestry" and "application of criteria and indicators", often considered strategic by the ITTO for SFM, appear only as priorities in 2.4% of the reports or are not even mentioned amid the top priority constraints and recommendations. These subjects are, indeed, included in most reports but usually with a considerably lower priority.

2.4.5 Innovation and viability of the recommendations

Is it realistically possible to innovate in relation to how to achieve SFM in the tropics? This is a subject that is very difficult to define and measure, and the authors of this report are unsure about the results

they obtained applying their own criteria and experience. Moreover, this matter is closely related to the previous result, as innovation is particularly required to overcome the generalized and crucial problems related to "*the absence of political priority for the forestry sector*". Several reports mentioned ideas that can be considered innovative at the country's level and that seem to be realistic and promising. Some of these suggestions were related to ways to increase political awareness and support, especially through a national account demonstrating the value of the goods and services provided by the forest. Others proposed the promotion of a nationwide policy agreement or pact about the role and future of the forests. A significant number of DMs insisted on a much larger role for the private sector. Are these proposals new? Yes, when looking at the national context and its description, although of course, this is not the case, when considering international literature nor if including non mainstream views that exist in a particular country. It is not necessary to say that these kinds of recommendations were completely ignored by governments.

The overall evaluation of the recommendations as related to innovation in the DMRs was low (only around 30% had some level of innovation) but the same value regarding realism or viability was very high (85%).

2.4.6 Suggested projects for ITTO

There were 133 projects and actions suggested for ITTO intervention. The authors considered this number excessive, largely surpassing ITTO's capacity to finance or address them and, in some countries, even surpassing the local capacity for preparation and management. The description of the projects was clearly too general and brief, often only one title and a few lines in 55% of the DMRs. Only two reports prepared brief descriptions of the projects that were adequate for follow-up. The proposals were all responses to real needs but not necessarily to clearly defined priorities. Additionally, as in the case of recommendations, very few were truly innovative. As noticed by interviewed stakeholders in country case studies, it was surprising to notice that there were practically no project or action proposals to other agencies considering that ITTO is not the only or the most important international player with regard to SFM in the tropics.

2.4.7 Overall quality

Considering the above-mentioned parameters the evaluation revealed that 9 DMRs duly responded to all of them, while another 11 presented several of the problems previously described. It is noticeable that the highest ranking corresponded to four of the five African DMRs included in the review. Also highly rated were the two DMRs of the Pacific. In general, Latin America DMRs achieved a significantly lower grading than those from other continents. This fact can result from a combination of the high complexity and very low priority that characterizes the forestry sector in Latin America.

The terms of reference for the DMs clearly requested to also recommend "*a sequence of actions to remove the constraints*", to "*provide cost estimates*, *whenever possible*". The "whenever possible" has been the rule, as only one DMR mentioned costs estimates for projects. The authors consider that the inclusion of this request in the terms of reference may have been, indeed, unrealistic.

2.5 ITTO projects and Diagnostic Missions: correlation with project recommendations

The proportion of projects suggested by the DMs that were effectively submitted to ITTO and, especially, the proportion of those projects that were financed is another measure of effectiveness. The identification of project proposals to be submitted to ITTO was a specific demand of the terms of reference of the DMs. Also, it is reasonable to assume that the interest and the confidence of the countries in the DM outputs may be measured by the proportion of DM's suggested projects that were indeed submitted to ITTO after conclusion of the DM.

Table 10 intends to show the proportion of the projects submitted to ITTO after the DM was carried out, that were suggested by the missions. It is based on 2008 ITTO EIMI and RFM information, on the DMRs, on the case studies and on the country information. This has been a very difficult task for several reasons. The ITTO system of registering projects is unusually complex among international assistance agencies, even more because approved projects are not necessarily financed and executed.

Table 10. Situation of ITTO projects suggested by the DMs				
Country	Projects proposed by the DM*	DM projects submitted to ITTO by country**	Other projects submitted to ITTO by country since the DM***	DM projects that were executed or are operational
Central African Republic	8	2	2	0
Republic of Congo	6(?)	6	7	3
Gabon	7	1	1	1
Liberia	14	1	0	1
Nigeria	3	0	0	0
Africa	38	10	10	5
Cambodia	4	0	3	0
Fiji	0	0	0	0
India	14	1	0	1
Indonesia	8	1	10	1
Papua New Guinea	4	0	0	0
Philippines	9	0	5	0
Thailand	7	2	0	0
Asia	46	4	18	2
Brazil	5	0	19	0
Ecuador	7	2	7	0
Guyana	2	0	3	0
Mexico	14	3	2	2
Panama	8	1	4	1
Peru	10	2	8	0
Suriname	5	1	0	0
Trinidad and Tobago	2	1	0	0
Latin America	53	10	43	3
Total	**137**	**24**	**71**	**10**
Notes: *Only projects. Other activities were excluded. **It is often very difficult to correlate DM's project proposals to proposed projects. ***Projects mentioned in ITTO's official listings.				

The extremely sketchy description of ITTO proposed projects in the DMRs makes it very difficult to correlate projects suggested with projects effectively submitted by countries to ITTO. The persons that responded to questionnaires or were interviewed were not equally informed about the DM and about the origin of the projects. Titles of the projects were often changed and the objectives were strongly modified, often restricted to what may be considered as a minor pilot intervention. In addition in some cases more than one project is submitted to match only one of the DM recommended projects. Anyhow, it has been out of the reach of the authors to explore the genesis of every recent ITTO project to check correlation with DMs. Therefore a considerable degree of error is possible.

The general result is not good. Even admitting that the DMs may have inspired many more projects than those registered in Table 10, the proportion of DM projects submitted by the governments and approved and financed by ITTO are both very limited. Only 18% of the 137 DM's project proposals[13] were submitted to ITTO. Only 7% of the project proposals were financed and executed or being executed. Meanwhile, the same countries submitted 71 new projects apparently not related to DMs proposals to ITTO, that is, three times the number originated by the DMs. Africa is the region where the use of the DM project recommendation has been most effective (26%) and, Asia the least effective (9%). It may be concluded that the DMs did not contribute significantly to improve the number of project proposals to ITTO.

3. Discussion and conclusions

This chapter is based on the joint analysis and comparison of the partial results obtained from the five sources of information that are the fundament of this evaluation and that were described, each one, in the previous chapter. It is organized as to attend all outputs requested in the consultant's terms of

[13] The review of the DMRs revealed only 133 project proposals. However, a country case study added 4 to the list.

reference. Each item mentioned in the terms of reference is covered but not necessarily in the same order. This chapter is essentially a discussion. However, the conclusions are self-evidenced in every section.

3.1 Overview of preparation and execution of the Diagnostic Missions

3.1.1 Mission preparation

As per Table 3, the country forest authorities considered that DMs preparation has been without major problems. The consultants (Table 2) were not fully satisfied with pre-mission communications, with availability of required technical information, or with information provided in advance to relevant stakeholders; but they all agree that local arrangements previous to the mission were very good. The lowest ranking parameter regarding DM preparation was related to previous information to stakeholders considered below requirement by 60% of the team leaders. A significant percentage (around 40%) of consultants stated that they were expecting more or better technical information and an equivalent portion considered that pre-mission communications could be improved.

The main concern of team leaders, expressed in several additional comments, was not being able to participate in the planning of the missions. Several expressed the need to discuss with ITTO's staff such matters as the mission's scope, timing and duration, team composition and local policy issues. They consider that such delicate and complex missions must be carefully tailored to each country's reality.

Timing has been considered by several as a key factor for DMs success. One of the most successful missions (Indonesia) benefited from an extraordinarily opportune moment in the recent history of this country.

3.1.2 ITTO responses to country demand for assistance

This aspect has been officially considered highly satisfactory. But, some authorities unofficially expressed that they somehow felt forced to accept the mission as a consequence of ITTO's insistence.

The country authorities were highly satisfied with the qualifications of the DM teams of experts appointed by ITTO, including the local team member. However, several mentioned, as the consultants did, that some highly necessary specialties were absent from the teams. It was also mentioned that success of such politically sensitive missions depends a lot on the international visibility and the political and diplomatic experience of the team leader. It has been often reiterated that internationally recognized high technical capability is not enough to lead this kind of mission.

3.1.3 Mission team size and selection of experts

The number of members in the team (usually 5 members, but as many as 7 in one case) has been considered adequate by all parties. However, as mentioned by some forest authorities, many consultants and especially their team leaders considered that their team lacked all required expertise to confront the issues faced during the mission. The most often mentioned lacking expertise areas were economists and social scientists (land tenure, anthropology) but even tropical silviculture specialists were cited. The list of reported gaps is large because it differs in each country. This fact reveals that several missions may have had more than one expert in the same field but did not cover all fields. This is another reason for a very careful selection and discussion of the team with regard to each country's reality.

The quality of the individual experts in the team has been considered excellent (Tables 2 and 3) by all sources of information. However, some additional comments are relevant: A few team leaders complained about the lack of fluency of some consultants in the ITTO official language used in the country (English, Spanish or French). Interviewed authorities during case studies, as well as reported in additional comments to questionnaire C, expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of experience of some consultants regarding their country's reality. But, the main expressions of dissatisfaction were related to the lack of participation of the team leaders in the selection of their own teams. Forty-four percent of the team leaders would have liked to have had the opportunity to participate in the selection

of their teams or, at least, to have had an opportunity to see the curriculum vitae of the proposed members.

3.1.4 Execution period

Time allocation for the missions has been an item considered insufficient by consultants and by forest authorities, especially regarding preparation and validation. The questionnaires A and B did not reveal clearly this issue, as only 25% of the team leaders but 50% of the team members considered that the time was insufficient. But, many additional comments were made by consultants and authorities regarding this matter. Most simply mention the need of one or two additional weeks in the country, especially to allow presentation of results to stakeholders and to disseminate and validate them. Team leaders clearly favor a pre-mission or preparatory mission, as it effectively took place in a few cases apparently with positive results; they also would have liked to have had more field visits and time specifically allocated for validation or diffusion of the report. Finally, the need for a follow-up of the application of the recommendations for several years has often been mentioned.

At this point it is interesting to note that the original concept of the DMs was limited to only two international experts and a two-week mission. As will be discussed further on, the issue of the execution period depends a lot on what is being expected from the DMs.

3.1.5 Methodology: holistic versus specific and analytical tools

Despite the fact that all DMs can broadly be considered as framed by the ITTO ToRs, each one followed a peculiar path. A few, especially in Africa, focused on very specific and clearly essential issues, often using a *sui generis* criterion. Others, especially those for Latin America, methodically reviewed almost every possible aspect of forestry. The use of analytical tools suggested by ITTO, such as “problem trees” (used by 20% of the DMs) and criterion 1 of the national level of the C&I (used by 30% of the DMs, often in addition to the “problem tree”), seems not to have contributed to focusing on a few key subjects. As mentioned there is no qualitative difference between those DMs that applied them and those that did not. Every DM made extensive use of previously existing diagnostics and planning exercises developed by the governments alone or with international cooperation.

Most DMRs in Latin America and Asia were qualified as “*lacking clear focus*” in interviews during case studies. This is to a large extent the same result obtained by the authors of this assessment on the basis of the analysis of the DMRs. It seems that this may also be a consequence of the inclusion of recommendations tailored to the particular interest of some team members and their national counterparts as well as an influence of other available planning exercises. These facts certainly contributed to the excessive number of barely prioritized recommendations that characterize most DMRs. As to be expected, contradictorily, the case studies revealed that several authorities and stakeholders considered that important fields were disregarded by some missions, such as protected areas, economics, anthropology, wildlife, watershed management and clean development mechanism.

3.1.6 Mission development

All questionnaires confirm that the DMs had a smooth execution, especially with regard to the quality of the local arrangements for accommodation, working place, field visits and meetings. Sixty four percent of the consultants were satisfied with access to forestry authorities. This looks fine but it also means that a third of them did not consider they had enough access to forestry authorities. Concern has been especially raised by the fact that 60% of team leaders declared they had limited access to high ranking non-forestry national authorities. In some African countries it has been difficult for the missions to contact large logging contractors, especially Asian enterprises, and in several cases it has not been so easy to discuss with stakeholders that are presumed to be serious critics of the forest administration, as in the case of opposition party figures and advocacy NGOs.

3.1.7 Participation of stakeholders

As revealed by questionnaires to consultants, the information on the mission’s objectives and methodology as well as relevant information necessary to facilitate participation has not been provided to all stakeholders in advance of the meetings. This fact transformed several meetings into one-way information sessions or caused much waste of time. It is worth noting, the same situation has been common during the case studies. The stakeholders were alerted of the occurrence of a meeting with

the mission but they had no idea as to its objective. Also it has frequently been the case that long meetings were programmed with inadequate stakeholders in terms of their capacity to provide information or opinions.

3.1.8 Local consultants

The team leaders were, in general, very happy with local consultants' performance. Several highlighted their key role for the success of the mission. However, 31% of the team leaders considered that the local consultants in their teams were not adequately qualified for the task. This implies the necessity of a careful selection of these essential members of any international team of experts.

3.1.9 Language issues

Language has not been considered an issue in the questionnaires. However, as mentioned, several team leaders complained about the lack of fluidity of some team members in official ITTO languages and, especially, they faced difficulty in obtaining a good translation of local or tribal languages during field visits.

3.1.10 Dissemination and presentation of the results

There is clear evidence (over 75% of the consultants and 55% of the authorities) about the lack of opportunities (time, resources) to share, validate and disseminate the results of the missions. This may explain why, during the six case studies, very few interviewees were aware of the DM and even fewer had ever seen the report. The only clear exception has been Indonesia, where the DMR has been fully translated, printed and distributed among public and academic institutions. Some other exceptions were the fruit of coincidental meetings that allowed team leaders and/or members to explain and discuss to large audiences the DM results. This has been the case, for example, for the Congo, RCA and Mexico DMs. Anyhow, most parties partially attributed the low level of implementation of recommendations to the deficiencies regarding validation and dissemination.

3.1.11 ITTO's support during and after the missions

It has been often mentioned by team leaders and by forest authorities that the presence of ITTO staff in the country would be beneficial at the preparation or launching and/or at the conclusion of the missions. ITTO staff may have contributed to opening doors among high ranking national authorities and, when the draft report was ready, may have given clearer clues about the potential assistance it can provide on the basis of the recommendations. An additional value of ITTO's staff participation would be a more realistic view on project proposals.

3.2 Analysis of the results of the Diagnostic Missions

3.2.1 Formal aspects

Although all DMRs can broadly be considered as framed by the ToRs, each one followed a specific path and each made use of a different format for the text, especially regarding the results. Therefore, their presentation is quite variable, making comparisons difficult. In some reports the constraints and recommendations are spread all over the report, while in others they are correctly accumulated in a specific chapter. In several reports it is very difficult to differentiate suggestions form recommendations.

Around 45% of the DMRs had more than 100 pages not considering attachments and, also, many summaries exceeded 20 pages. Some summaries are adequate but other contains non essential elements and/or lack important information. Part of the excessive size of these reports is a consequence of the inclusion of relatively easily available descriptions of the forest and forestry sector.

3.2.2 Identification of the factors that are "most critical" to SFM

The identification of the factors that are "most critical" to SFM has been a central goal of the DMs. The identification of limiting factors was adequately carried out if viewed under traditional parameters. Several issues clearly emerged (Table 10), pertaining to the categories of forest policy, legislation and

planning, forest institutions, land tenure as related to forestry and socioeconomic and policy context. The reading of the full version of the DMRs demonstrates that the formally mentioned constraints are not always those that the mission really considered as the most important or as the most critical. These are usually well described in other chapters but not reproduced in the constraints section. Very often, the fundamental issues are encapsulated by the expression "*lack of political priority*", a factor that it is not usually prioritized as such. This very important issue is extensively discussed further on.

3.2.3 Number and quality of recommendations

The main expected result of the DMs is, obviously, its recommendations. The 20 DMs produced 502 or 633 recommendations, depending on the criteria adopted to count them. This is too many recommendations for an exercise intending to focus on key critical aspects. Few DMs restrained from elaborating a large number of recommendations and 5 of them had 40 or more recommendations. The authors of the assessment consider that 55% of the reports have too many recommendations, contributing to dilute the focus of the exercise, as also pointed out by interviews with stakeholders during case studies. Moreover, despite the ToRs requesting a "sequence of actions" to remove the constraints, a sequential presentation or clear prioritization of recommendations has been made in few cases.

Some other problems about recommendations were highlighted during case studies and by examining the DMRs. The most important is their very general nature often restricted to one or two lines that in some cases may be valid for every tropical country or that may suggest several quite different practical measures.

An additional but very important fact is that none of the 20 DMs has responded to the ToRs suggestion of providing a cost estimate for the sequence of recommendations. A handful of them mentioned an idea of cost only for ITTO suggested projects. On the positive side most recommendations were considered realistic or applicable in the national context and this is why most of them were also accepted by the countries. However, very few recommendations were considered innovative.

3.2.4 Correlation of critical factors or constraints with recommendations

The analysis of the DMRs indicated a poor correlation of priority critical factors with priority recommendations. Critical factors such as "land tenure", recognized as the second most critical constraint received much lower equivalent level recommendations. This relation has been much worse (four times lower) for the category "national socioeconomic and political context" and the same situation is noticeable in many other categories of constraints and recommendations (Table 10). When the lack of correlation is due to constraints to SFM that are not forestry sector-depending issues, such as those two mentioned, the explanation or justification is self-evident: the DM team simply avoided entering subjects that exceed the forestry authority or that seem to be impossible to solve[14].

However, as it is well known, the constraints of a general or nation-wide nature are frequently the true "most limiting factor" to SFM and, as mentioned, it is often summarized as "*lack of political priority*". It is usually characterized by weak application of forestry policy, legislation and planning and/or by limited institutional capacity of the forestry sector and their main expression is a meager budget for forestry or the absence of autonomy to manage the sector's incomes. Lack of sustained political priority for forestry, which is a commonality in many tropical developing countries, is a highly complex matter. It is rooted in inequity and poverty issues, such as education and correlated perception of the forests as an obstacle to development and/or as having no economic or other values, conjugated with other poignant priorities such as food (land for agriculture), health and education. Other problems can be added such as population growth in forest frontiers; social instabilities including wars and revolutions; the most diverse forms of corruption often translated as "illegal logging" and, of course, predominance of the interest of the few over those of the majority[15]. As several DMRs and case

[14] One of the reports very candidly says about this issue: "*At first sight and even at second and third sight, land seems to stand out as the overwhelming limiting factor to SFM. Almost all of the forest resource is on communally owned customary land ….*". But later it concludes: "*For the reasons given above, land cannot be considered as a serious immediate constraint as it is impracticable to remove it*".

[15] Examples, among many more, extracted from DMRs are: "*Many crucial constraints for forestry development are external to the forestry sector per se: demography, macroeconomic volatility, competitiveness of the*

studies confirmed, another growing extra-sectoral issue for SFM are new and complex environmental licensing procedures.

Most DMRs clearly mention those constraints as being decisive. But, most DMRs did not prioritize them and did not propose any recommendations to confront them. They limited their extra-sectoral consideration and recommendations to the unquestionably important "land tenure issues" and to a vague "sociopolitical and economic context". This reaction is perfectly reasonable and comprehensible. However, when the real limiting factor to SFM does not pertain to the forestry sector, remedies proposed to constraints that depend on it simply do not work and, as an example, better budgets for the forestry institutions or removal of perverse incentives to deforestation remain unchanged[16]. Another example of this is related to "land tenure issues", a subject that despite being recognized as essential in almost every report and tropical country for decades is still to produce any evident result to avoid encroachment in the forest estate. Recognizing such overwhelming facts, a few DMRs rightly proposed, as the only real solution, the need for a wide "*national pact or agreement*"[17] regarding forests and forestry and others insisted on the need of a "better *valuation of the contribution of the forestry sector to the national economy and welfare*", hoping that such a demonstration may raise real public awareness and effective political priority for the sector.

This situation prevented most DMs to achieve their very basic goal. They detected a number of constraints that derive from extra-sectoral issues and proposed solutions pertaining almost exclusively to the forestry sector. As in past forestry planning exercises, these recommendations, even if applied, simply cannot achieve expected results while the very basic constraints remain unchanged. This is why forestry legislation and frequent institutional changes in developing countries rarely produced any consistent result in terms of SFM improvement. To a large extent, those DMRs that failed to provide a clear list of prioritized constraints and corresponding recommendations may be considered as not having followed the first principle underlying the entire ITTO effort regarding the ITTO Objective 2000 and its ToRs.

3.2.5 More, better and more useful ITTO projects?

As seen in Table 10 only 18% of the 137 project proposals in the DMRs were submitted to ITTO and only 7% were effectively financed and/or executed. By any means of evaluation this is a very low percentage of success that is even worse if considering that since the DMs were carried out the same benefited countries have submitted 71 projects apparently not related to the DM.

Several factors may explain this poor result. The excessively schematic description of the project proposals contained in the DMRs is probably a key one. Another is the excessive number of project proposals, ignoring priority, and making choice more difficult, in addition to largely exceeding ITTO's capacity to respond. An additional factor has been the limited distribution of most DMRs at the national level.

However, there is no way to avoid concluding that the overwhelming reason has been the lack of interest of recipient governments. An anecdotal but illustrative case was provided by the only Panamanian project among 8 mentioned in the corresponding DMR that has been submitted to ITTO and approved. This project resulted from a casual encounter of the mission with the staff of an NGO during a field visit. The mission was very impressed by the work and ideas of the NGO team and included their project concept in their report, despite its subject being of a collateral relevance for SFM. The NGO prepared the proposal and insistently used the DMR as an argument to get governmental and ITTO priority, and the project was financed. In this specific case it must also be

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country, enabling environment for investments, governance and a minimum of infrastructure roads but also basic needs"; or "*to effectively address illegal logging it requires, first of all, solving the overall problem of corruption within the enforcement agencies, which in turn requires political will*"; or "*The current economic incentives and the market framework still favor conventional and illegal logging*"; or "*The underlying cause of this lies deep within the society and its history and reflects the lack of stakeholders' consensus on both the objectives of, and the means for, forest management."*

[16] Sometimes, budgets are improved and perverse incentives are removed for a while. But the original problems soon re-appear under new administrations or new forms.

[17] This has been a discarded suggestion of the Brazilian DMR. The governmental answer has been that to practice SFM is "*already a national priority*" although even official reports recognize that over 90% of the natural forests timber does not come from SFM.

recognized that the current governmental capacity of the forestry sector to prepare and follow up technical cooperation is very limited. None of the other 7 projects that were essential to improve SFM in the country was even drafted.

3.3 Validity (usefulness), efficiency and effectiveness of the Diagnosis Missions

3.3.1 Measured in terms of implemented recommendations

The level of acceptance of DM recommendations has been very high as per country questionnaires and as per case studies results (84% and 92%, respectively). However, on the basis of the same sources, the level of implementation has been much lower, showing 16% fully implemented, and 30% as partially implemented, 44% being implemented and 10% delayed (Tables 4, 5, 7). The gap between information provided by country authorities and collected during case studies has been considerable, showing that probably only 6% of the recommendations were indeed fully implemented. In some cases the difference has been large (Table 7). Considering the fact that 12 of the 20 DMs were carried out four or more years ago, this result is a clear confirmation of weak implementation. It was also established, during the country case studies, that "partial implementation" may mean only very specific actions that are a long way from satisfying the real goal of the recommendation. The differences between the official account and the consultant's account were explained in the corresponding results chapter. These results are consistent with the opinion of 50% of the DM team leaders that considered that the governments did not really endorse the results of their missions. Even more, 82% of the team leaders considered that the governments did not implement the key policy proposals.

A very interesting dimension of this subject is given by the fact that 43% of the team leaders and a meaningful 71% of the consultants responded that they do not or do not quite consider the governments had the capacity to adopt the policy proposals they have made. This is not a confession of error in the making of the recommendations. These candid answers certainly refer to the above mentioned facts. The team members knew for sure that most of the recommendations pertaining to intra-sectoral policy (legislation enforcement, effective planning, healthy institutions, corruption control, etc.) will have little chance to be successful because the extra-sectoral conditions ("*political priority*") for their implementation would not be favorable.

Another important consideration relevant to this subject is the fact that it is very difficult to correlate actions executed by the country with a specific DM recommendation, as other related documents usually contain the same or very similar recommendations. Most DMs were shortly preceded or followed by other planning exercises, including diagnostics and recommendations. These exercises were almost in every case much more ambitious than the DMs, involving longer periods of work, more staff, considerable financial resources and many national and international institutions, including the IBRD and FAO and a number of important bilateral actors such as GTZ, DANIDA or CIDA. This has been the case in every case study country in Asia and Latin America. It is evident the DMs made use of all available information, probably confirming several previously existing recommendations and, of course, it is equally probable that in following planning exercises DM recommendations were used. However, considering that most recommendations of any source are more or less equivalent, it is very difficult to confirm paternity.

3.3.2 Measured in terms of added knowledge, innovation and applicability

The case studies clearly revealed that most stakeholders, including many governmental staff that in the questionnaires declared the DM as "useful or very useful", did not really consider that the DMs added knowledge or information that can be considered new for their institutions or for the country at the time of the mission. The DMs had obviously to function on the basis of existing knowledge as they had no resources to do any kind of research or additional studies. Therefore, innovation in DMs has had to be expected only in terms of the policy analysis and recommendations. The author's opinion about this matter is that only 30% of the DMRs submitted recommendations that may relatively be considered as innovative. Instead, as to be expected, most recommendations (85%) are clearly viable or realistic considering the country's situation.

From an international point of view it must be recognized that the 20 DMRs are, altogether, an impressive piece of information about the reality of SFM in tropical countries, especially because in spite of their weaknesses they are more uniform and briefer than other available planning exercises.

3.3.3 Measured in terms of country actors' opinions

Governmental authorities were queried on usefulness of the DMs in questionnaire C and during interviews in the case studies. Over 80% percent of the country authorities that answered the questionnaire responded that the DM has been very useful or useful. But, as previously demonstrated, this affirmation is not corroborated by the level of implementation of recommendations nor in terms of added knowledge or by any other measured parameter. Even less if taking into consideration that the overwhelming majority of interviewed persons during case studies openly expressed not having seen the DMRs.

The case studies revealed several situations. In Indonesia, the interviewed governmental forest authorities as well as every stakeholder confirmed the DMs were very useful or useful. There is indeed evidence that the DM has been important for Indonesia despite this country also benefiting from several other planning exercises. As previously mentioned, the DMR, fully translated and published as a booklet, was well known by most interviewed stakeholders and has been utilized for planning, academic and other purposes. The same reaction was received in Cambodia. However, in this case nothing confirms this affirmation as practically no one, among interviewees, has even seen the report.

In Brazil and Panama the DMs were unanimously declared useless by all interviewed stakeholders, including governmental officers. In Africa, everyone declared the exercise had been useful but very few persons had seen the DMR.

Thus, depending on the circumstances and on the interest of the government, a few DMRs seem to have been more useful in a few countries than in the majority of the others.

3.3.4 Measured in terms of increased awareness on ITTO and its work

ITTO was already very well known in all countries benefited by DMs. However, it is evident that the presence of a relatively large ITTO international mission holding a significant number of meetings, traveling country wide and producing a report, especially when this has been available, contributed to a better knowledge and understanding of ITTO's work in the country. It has been impossible to measure the amplitude of such output but it is probably less than the impact of most of ITTO's other projects.

3.3.5 Measured in terms of cost/benefits

The cost of the 20 evaluated DMs for ITTO has been officially estimated at around two million dollars (grossly 100,000 dollars per DM) to which the costs of the participation of the national counterparts and of facilities provided by the countries must be added. To these costs, it is also necessary to add ITTO secretariat costs to organize and administer over 80 special services agreements and to participate, to some extent, in several DMs. Therefore, the total cost of the 20 DMs is probably closer to 3 million dollars.

Theoretically there are two main alternatives to evaluate the cost/benefit of the operation. The first would be based on its efficiency and effectiveness regarding each one of its objectives in each country. Based on the ToRs, the key evaluation factor would be the proportion of effectively implemented recommendations. This approach will probably reveal a slightly positive result for a few DMs and a clearly overall negative for the rest, as the percentage of implemented recommendations is small.

From the perspective of the benefited countries cost effectiveness must have been positive even assuming most recommendations were not applied, because their investment in the mission has been small. Also, whatever the total expenditure may have been for the 20 DMs, it may be considered fully cost effective, for the countries and for ITTO, if only a few of the 502 recommendations were applied. Each one of the 248 policy recommendations and 121 technical recommendations, if successfully applied, may potentially represent a net benefit of several millions dollars for a single producer country. Moreover, it may even be considered that only one recommendation, in one country, may

have largely covered the total cost of all 20 DMs[18]. Thus, despite the effectiveness of the DMs being low, its cost/benefit relation evaluated in terms of service for the countries is most probably highly positive.

To know if the cost/benefit of DMs has been positive for ITTO is more difficult, as in theory it depends on an evaluation of the impact of projects and other ITTO actions. As the total cost of the DMs is equivalent to the cost of a single large ITTO project, the DMs may be considered a fully valid experiment, even considering its low effectiveness. Moreover, it is obvious that the DMs, viewed as a whole, were more successful and useful than many individual projects, as clearly proven in several ex-post evaluations[19].

3.4 Factors that contributed to the non-implementation of recommendations

Why were accepted recommendations not implemented by countries in the same proportion? There are several possible answers to this question. To "accept" a recommendation it is sufficient to consider it as useful and feasible or, simply "*to have nothing against*". Acceptance is not necessarily related to priority assignment or means to achieve it. This means that a portion of the recommendations are simply forgotten. Another reason is that some of the recommendations are of a never ending nature; therefore, they permanently appear as "being implemented". Other recommendations simply cannot be implemented in brief periods, requiring in any event several years of sustained work. Despite these reasons, it is clear that they do not completely explain why the portion of fully implemented recommendations is so low, even by official accounts, in countries where the DMs took place more than four years ago.

Possibly the most influential reason for the unimplemented recommendations is that 49% of them were of a policy nature, thus often depending on procedures and decisions above or out of the forestry sector (legislative for laws and annual budget or planning ministries for financing, and several other ministries for other actions) and, as usual, requiring a long time to be implemented. As a matter of fact, the most commonly quoted reason for slow implementation of recommendations, in country reports and case studies, has been budgetary and financial restrictions and, as a result, low institutional capacity for implementation. This, again and again, has been summarized as "*low political priority*". Another reason for limited implementation of recommendations can be attributed to the frequent changes of decision makers in the public forestry sector, with recurrent loss of institutional memory[20] and with different ideas about forest policy, planning and institutional organization. In most countries where the DM took place between 2001 and 2004 there were more than four changes of the government forest authorities. In countries with DMs taking place from 2005 to 2007 there was an average of two changes of forestry authority. In one African country there have been 12 changes of forestry authority since the DM took place. The changes also affected forest related legislation. In the past seven years almost every country among those receiving DMs has often undergone profound forestry legislation modifications. This has been, as an example, the case of Peru and Brazil. Many of the changes are well correlated with DMs suggestions or recommendations. However, some changes go in different directions. Independently of the correlation of the new legal text with recommendations, they usually imply a halt in actions and a review of past decisions.

3.4.1 Were ITTO's general objective and term of references for the Diagnosis Missions realistic?

This is a very critical matter regarding this assessment as the DMs were based on the concept that it is possible to determine a few key or critical factors that are the most limiting constraints to achieve SFM. As mentioned, this concept emanated from the Poore & Hooi Chew report "Review of Progress

[18] One example illustrates this situation. Illegal logging in Indonesia represented, before the DM, a loss of tax collection estimated in US$2 to 3.5 billion dollars. One of the DM recommendations regarding illegal logging was fully applied through the issuance of Presidential Instruction Number 4, 2005 involving 18 Ministries and non-Ministerial high level officials under the coordination of the Minister of Politics and Security Affairs. Another recommendation, regarding measures to increase the level of deterrence of illegal logging was also relatively well developed. As a consequence of these actions, a very significant reduction of illegal logging in Indonesia has been unanimously recognized by all parties during case study interviews.

[19] Ex-post evaluation of six ITTO projects developed in 2007 revealed that three of these projects, costing between 1.2 and 2.6 million dollars each one left no tangible benefit (Dourojeanni, M. J. and J. Seve, 2007).

[20] In African and Latin American case studies it has been difficult to find anyone in the forest administration that remembered the DM. None of the interviewed high level officers of the governments had ever seen the DMR.

towards the Year 2000 Objective" (2000). Its goal has been very precisely outlined to identify constraints that can best be diagnosed by punctual discussions. However, it seems that the original proposal that was quite clearly limited to the identification of key constraints easier to identify on the spot and "*to decide where assistance can be most effective*"[21] has been somehow expanded when transformed into Council's Decision 2 (XXIX) and its corresponding terms of reference that aim to: (1) identify the factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of sustainable forest management in that country; (2) assemble these constraints in order of importance; and (3) recommend a sequence of actions to remove the constraints, providing cost estimates whenever possible. It was also expanded when, disregarding the original proposal of two weeks missions with two experts it was transformed in 2 to 3 weeks field missions with 5 or more experts. But the most important distortion occurred during DMs realization.

Strictly based on the "*identification of key constraints*" guiding general objective, it is possible to say that very few DMs achieved these results. Two reasons are evident for this disappointing result: (1) most DMs were reluctant to use the criteria of most critical factor (and its unavoidable similarity with the biological concept of "*limiting factor*") or felt it as being inapplicable to deal with forestry issues; and (2) most DMs simply avoided prioritizing and proposing recommendations to critical constraints to SFM that were not pertaining to the conventional forestry sector.

Is it possible to use the ecologically tested "*limiting factor*" criterion to the analysis of SFM constraints? As it is obvious, the elimination of the limiting factor immediately opens the space to a new limiting factor, thus, theoretically the exercise becomes a never ending task. However, the elimination of a few layers of truly limiting factors must have a very considerable positive effect. Applying this to SFM seems to be possible. In the case of the DM it was expected that the most relevant levels or layers of limiting factors be revealed and confronted with appropriate measures. This would result in the clear prioritization of a few critical constraints to be solved in order, one after the other, applying a sequence of well-defined and duly budgeted actions.

Few DMRs discussed how to achieve this task and most discarded it considering that too many coalescent constraints would need to be solved simultaneously to achieve a single result[22]. Forty four percent of the team leaders considered ITTO's ToRs as not or not quite realistic or viable. Is this a consequence of an overly ambitious or unrealistic ITTO objective? It is probable that ITTO did not realize that using the term "*factors that are most critical*" was opening an enormous field of analysis that, if well done, would imply aspects that were far away from forestry and even from the capacity of the mission members. Therefore, most DMs simply disregarded the overall terms of reference and used a much more traditional approach resulting in multiple subsidiary recommendations required to achieve upper level recommendations[23]. The end result has been, in most cases, no clear definition of priority constraints or priority recommendations. As already mentioned, the ToRs prepared by ITTO

[21] As an example, the Brazilian DM was invited by the government not to make recommendations that fall outside ITTO's capacity to provide support to their implementation. Therefore, all recommendations were submitted as elements of proposed ITTO's projects and those recommendations that may only be exclusively taken on by the government, were presented as ideas or suggestions. The Brazilian decision seems to be based on an element of the report of D. Poore and T. Hooi Chiew (2000) that states: "*It is recommended that small, short diagnostic missions should visit a country, work with the relevant ministries, departments, industries and other stakeholders, and visit a sample of forests, to decide where assistance can be most effectively and economically targeted.*" (underlining is ours). The Brazilian government's decision is fully coherent with this statement.

[22] A comment included in one of the DMRs states: "*The main constraints internal to the sector are numerous each important in their own right since many of them if they are removed one by one would not allow any development until all constraints have been tackled.* Nevertheless it continues saying *"However, some constraints if removed will improve many of the problems enumerated. Again the external constraints linked to the sector are crucial bottlenecks but will require political will, better governance and corresponding macro economic policies".* Another is: "*Las discusiones y la revisión de los documentos notifican un enorme listado de las causas de la deforestación y de las amenazas a la sostenibilidad de los bosques tropicales, sin embargo, no existe un consenso sobre cuales serían los factores de mayor importancia y lo que se debe priorizar inmediatamente. Esto quedó muy claro cuando la Misión solicitó, al final de las entrevistas, la identificación de dos o tres factores prioritarios. En realidad en el escenario actual, todo es considerado como prioridad y los problemas no son resueltos".*

[23] Again, it must be highlighted that some DMs were much more coherent with the ToRs than most others, especially in Africa and in the Pacific but also at least one in Asia.

intending to guide the analysis using the enabling factor's chapter of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators may have involuntarily promoted this fact. Anyhow, comparing ITTO's ToRs with DM's results it is evident that the latter do not correspond to expectations.

Another issue regarding the terms of reference is their scope: Was it reasonable to expect a small team of experts in only a couple of weeks (at a total cost of only around US$100,000) to produce a diagnostic and a set of recommendations that covers almost every aspect of forestry in each country, even in those as big and complex as Brazil, Indonesia or India? Obviously it is not reasonable and, in defense of ITTO, this was not the original proposition. However, when comparing the scope of most DMRs with exercises several times longer and more expensive, conducted by consortia of international agencies, their coverage is equivalent. There has been an obvious distortion of ITTO's objective regarding the diagnostic missions from the quite limited original idea by Poore and Hooi Chiew (2000). The DMs were not conceived to compete with other traditional and ambitious planning exercises. They were supposed to be simple, direct and practical decision-making tools. Most of them are not.

3.4.2 Were the governments really interested in the Diagnostic Mission reports?

Why are fully accepted recommendations not implemented and why are reports qualified as "very useful" not known, let alone utilized? Despite the described imperfections of the DMRs, it is unavoidable to conclude that their success or failure in terms of implementation of recommendations essentially depends on the forest authorities, which are the central element of SFM policy in each country.

Regarding this matter, it is interesting to go back to the answers to the question "*In your opinion… Did the government "really" endorse the mission's report?*" that was addressed to consultants in questionnaires A and B: Fifty percent of the team leaders and 40% of the team members answered "not" or "not quite", to some extent advancing the result confirmed in this assessment.

Several factors, all of them already cited, contribute to this fact: (1) "to accept" is relatively easy and very different from "to implement"; (2) the forest authorities often don't have the institutional capacity (political influence, budget, manpower, etc.) to implement recommendations even if they want to; (3) as explained, most limiting factors to SFM are of an extra-sectoral nature and depend on complex policy and legal processes out of the control of the forestry sector; (4) frequent changes in legislation, institutions and staff make continuity of actions difficult and; (5) several countries were affected by serious social or political unrest, including war.

It must also be highlighted that ITTO is a relatively minor player, especially in terms of financing, among international and bi-national sources of cooperation. It is known to support interesting but relatively isolated mid-size projects but it is not recognized as a provider of major long term programmes of assistance, as is the case of the IBRD and regional and bi-lateral finance institutions or some large multi and bi-lateral technical agencies. In addition, the very peculiar project approval and financing mechanism of ITTO is not very attractive to those requiring its assistance due to the fact that difficultly approved projects may not be financed and planned second phases, if financed, are often delayed. Also, lack of trained staff to prepare project proposals in several forest administrations is to be considered. These facts may have most probably been gravitational to explain why so few DMRs projects recommended for ITTO financing were indeed prepared and submitted.

Also relevant to explain the limited response of the governments to the DMRs may be the fact, previously mentioned, that many in the countries felt that ITTO has been slightly too proactive with regard to the DMs. This may also explain why some DMs may have been carried out in periods clearly unfavorable for future implementation of their recommendations.

4. Highlighting key conclusions

In reading this section it is important to take into consideration that the conclusions that are highlighted refer to the exercise as a whole and not to a particular DM.

4.1 Success

1. It is undeniable that the combined results of these 20 DMs provide a unique piece of information on the current or recent situation of SFM in the tropics, which is certainly very helpful to those interested in the subject.

2. However, by most parameters used in this assessment, the DM exercise in its current form was not successful. The DMs did not achieve a reasonable level of implementation of accepted recommendations, they were not considered particularly innovative nor did they significantly add to knowledge, increase awareness or allow for more and better ITTO projects. Neither were their reports adequately validated and disseminated nor were they utilized in the countries and they were often described as "*lacking of focus*" by those few that have seen them.

3. Paradoxically, in terms of cost/benefits, the DMs may have been very efficient as only one or a few implemented recommendations in one or more countries may have rendered economic benefits many times greater than the small total amount invested by ITTO, which was not larger than the cost of one single project that may have not achieved any significant result. From this point of view the DMs may be qualified as successful.

4. Another valid interpretation of the results of the ITTO's DM's exercise is to recognize that in spite of not being anywhere near expectations it has not been less successful than any other much more ambitious, long and costly similar exercise developed in the same tropical countries since the launching of the Tropical Forest Action Plan in the 1980s, as demonstrated by current deforestation rates and extremely limited SFM of natural forests.

4.2 Causes of the limited success

1. Several coalescent factors contributed to this result. They may be grouped largely as follows:

    a. The original idea of the DMs suffered a progressive change and, when applied in the field, frequently became a much larger and somehow unbalanced conventional forestry planning exercise.
    b. There is much discussion and some evidence that some suggestions in the terms of reference may have not been fully on line with the basic objective of "*identifying the factors that are most critical*", involuntarily stimulating dispersion instead of focusing on key issues and, anyhow, only a few DMs strictly applied them, resulting in lack of correlation between identified main constraints and proposed actions.
    c. Most countries did not pay much attention to the reports, as a consequence of many factors such as the mentioned DMRs weaknesses; frequent changes in policy, legislation, institutions and staff; "*lack of political priority for the forestry sector*" or, because the constraints to SFM and their solutions were of an extra-sectorial nature.
    d. ITTO is not a major international actor in terms of financing tropical forestry development and it may have attempted by itself an approach above its real capacity to provide funds and technical assistance for implementation and follow-up.

2. The key deficiency of most DMs may be summarized as failure to provide a clear list of main constraints and corresponding prioritized recommendations. In several reports there is no good correlation between the identified main constraints and the proposed recommendations. The DMRs avoided recommendations related to extra-sectoral constraints (not depending on the forestry sector) and limited themselves to forestry issues although these are not necessarily the "*most crucial constraint to SFM*". Examples of this situation are land tenure and socio-economic and political contexts that are considered, in many reports, as top constraints, but received relatively low priority recommendations.

3. Every DMR has been prepared using a different approach and methodology and presented using a different format and structure. Especially variable has been the treatment of constraints or "*most critical factors*" and of recommendations, which in addition often cannot be differentiated from suggestions.

4. The number of recommendations has been clearly excessive in most reports, ensuring dispersion and making implementation difficult as most reports diluted some very important measures among many others that were not urgent or significant. The number of projects and actions recommended to ITTO in most DMRs clearly surpass ITTO capacity to provide assistance over a mid-term period

(5 to 10 years) and several proposals are not related to the priority issues identified. It is also noticeable that no action or project has been proposed to any other donor or agencies that may play key roles regarding SFM.

5. Recommendations

1. Considering the results of this assessment it is advisable not to continue financing DMs in their current form.

2. To continue undertaking DMs it is necessary for ITTO to first:

    a. Agree upon the amplitude to be given to the term "*factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of SFM*". Almost always these factors pertain to the concept generally described as "*lack of political will*" and demanding actions that involve government levels and sectors that are above the national forestry sector or that touch sensible social and economic policies and situations. If a country is not ready to accept recommendations also dealing with these aspects, it may be advisable not to send a DM.
    b. Review the DM's objectives and terms of reference to clarify them and, especially, to differentiate them from those of other more conventional forestry planning exercises financed by other international and bilateral agencies.
    c. The terms of reference must include a requirement to present a clear sequence of actions to implement each recommendation and its cost estimate(s).
    d. Enforce a common standard regarding DM approach and methodology including report organization and, especially, presentation of recommendations.
    e. Considering that most factors that are critical in preventing SFM are of a very complex and costly nature, greatly extrapolating ITTO's capacity as provider of assistance, consider whether it is necessary to invite other donor's officers into the missions.

3. Preparation of future Diagnostic Missions:

    a. The approval of any new Diagnostic Mission must be exclusively based on the initiative of the country and on an official request that expresses willingness of the national forest authorities to use its results, responding to a real national need and a clear opportunity.
    b. The planning of such missions must be done carefully, with full participation of the country's authority and of a consensually previously selected team leader. The three parties (the country, ITTO and the team leader) must have the opportunity to discuss timing, duration, expertise required in the team and team member selection, among other aspects of the mission.
    c. It is advisable that, in addition to their professional capacity, the team leaders be selected on the basis of their political experience, ability and local influence (if possible).
    d. A very short preparatory mission of the selected team leader and an ITTO official is highly advisable to refine the programme, collect information, selecting only meetings and visits that are relevant and, of course, to inform stakeholders about the objectives of the incoming mission.
    e. Considering the extra-sectoral nature of most critical factors preventing SFM it is indispensable to plan comprehensive discussion meetings with authorities of these other sectors, including policy makers of opposition parties if related to the issues that affect SFM.
    f. The team leader and ITTO must ensure that appointed consultants receive all pertinent information on the country well in advance of the beginning of the mission in the country.

4. Execution of future Diagnostic Missions:

    a. Two full weeks is time enough for in-country missions in small and mid size countries. Large countries may require three week-long missions. The success depends a lot on the quality and true necessity of the meetings that are programmed.
    b. It is essential that the team leader enforce the obligation of every member of the mission to keep the focus on the mission's objective, avoiding the temptation to include issues or recommendations that relate to his/her field but that are not transcendent with regard to the most critical factors to SFM.

5. Validation, diffusion and implementation of recommendations:

a. When the final report is approved, it is advisable to allow the team leader to spend an additional week in the country to assist the government to validate and disseminate the results. During this mission it is highly advisable to have the presence of an ITTO authority and to promote the report amid higher key governmental levels.
b. The budget of the DMs must include the cost of the translation (if necessary), the publication of the report (hard copies and via Internet) and its distribution in the country.
c. ITTO responsibility must include a more expedited or preferential processing for ITTO projects that were recommended by the DM and, also, its assistance to the country to obtain financial and technical assistance from other multilateral or bi-lateral sources, as needed.
d. If the country is really interested in the application or implementation of the results of the Diagnostic Mission it makes a lot of sense, upon request, to develop one or more brief ad-hoc missions to assist the governments to refine recommendations or to provide them specific help, i.e. for project preparation.

ANNEX 1[24]

Terms of Reference for the Assessment of Completed Diagnostic Missions

In the context of implementing strategic policy actions of the Council as approved in the ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the years 2008-2009 [Decision 2(XLIII), paragraph 3(xii)], item 22 of the Work Programme (PP-A/43-207), under this Special Service Agreement, the consultant together with a Co-Consultant [Name – Country] and the National Experts (from six countries) shall assist ITTO in facilitating a review and assessment of all the technical diagnostic missions conducted (list on Annex IV); in assessing in-depth, the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of such missions on the basis of six case studies in six countries to be selected in consultation with the Executive Director; and in proposing measures to improve the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of these missions, including effective follow-up implementation actions by the respective Member countries.

Earlier, pursuant to ITTC Decision 2(XXIX) on "ITTO Objective 2000", ITTO had carried out Diagnostic Missions to a number of Member countries in the Africa, Asia & Pacific, and in the Latin America regions, to: (a) Identify the factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of sustainable forest management in that country; (b) Assemble these constraints in order of importance; and (c) Recommend a sequence of actions to remove the constraints, providing cost estimates whenever possible (Terms of Reference for Diagnostic Mission is on Annex II).

The Consultant's responsibilities include, *inter alia*, the following:

Overview

1. Providing overall leadership to the Team comprising of the Co-Consultant and six National Experts (for case studies only) to ensure the smooth and successful compliance with the terms of reference and implementation of the planned work (proposed work schedule on Annex III), with the support of the ITTO Secretariat, and the relevant Ministries of the six selected countries (case studies);
2. Coordinating the work of both International and National Experts (for the case studies) to ensure that the Terms of Reference of the consultancy assignment are adequately addressed in a balanced and meaningful manner within the constraints of time and resources provided;
3. Supervising and guiding the preparation of the Report, finalizing and submitting a Draft Report, an Executive Summary, and the Final Report of the Mission by dates to be set by the Executive Director; and
4. Present the Mission's Report at the Session of the International Tropical Timber Council to be held in 2009.

Activities

1. Review and assess all the ITTO Diagnostic Missions conducted (list on Annex IV), and:

    a. review and assess the quality of the reports;
    b. review and assess the methodology and approach;
    c. assess the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of these Missions;
    d. determine the extent to which the recommendations of the Missions have been accepted and implemented;
    e. reasons/factors contributed for the non-acceptance of recommended policy proposals and action proposals.

[24] Other documents, such as Questionnaire A for Diagnostic Mission team leaders; Questionnaire B for Diagnostic Mission consultants; Questionnaire C for country National Forest Authorities, with assistance of a local consultant; Terms of Reference for National Experts in charge of the preparation of the reports for the case studies; Indonesia case study and international consultants comments; Cambodia case study and international consultants comments; Brazil case study and international consultants comments; Panama case study and international consultants comments; Congo case study and international consultants comments; CAR case study and international consultants comments and reports from local consultants are available on request.

2. Undertake field visits to six ITTO Member countries that have benefited from the Diagnostic Missions, selected in consultation with the Executive Director, and perform an in-depth assessment on the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of the Missions, with a view to determine the extent to which the recommendations of the Missions have been accepted and implemented; analyze and evaluate factors effecting the efficiency; and more specifically, address among others the followings:

   Outputs: did the Mission result in:

   a. significantly improved knowledge on the country conditions;
   b. systematic follow-up actions by the government to assess the findings and recommendations;
   c. policy proposals which were implemented by the government;
   d. action proposals which were implemented by other stakeholders;
   e. project proposals to ITTO and approval and financing of these proposals/strategic approach to country support;
   f. improved awareness on ITTO and its work in the country;
   g. improved awareness on key problems and possible solutions among stakeholders;
   h. a contribution to engagement of stakeholders in the SFM process;
   i. non-acceptance of recommended policy proposals and action proposals, including reasons;

   Dissemination:

   a. pre mission communication to stakeholders;
   b. contributions from stakeholders;
   c. consultations during the mission;
   d. language issue;
   e. dissemination of report and its findings;
   f. presentation of the results in the country;

   Methodologies and Activities:

   a. ITTO response time to the request for conducting the Diagnostic Mission;
   b. Mission team size, composition and work schedule;
   c. quality of the Terms of Reference for Diagnostic Missions (Annex II) and determine their usefulness, relevance and possible need for revision;
   d. the approach taken during conducting of the Mission, for example: holistic versus focused analysis on selected key issues;
   e. participation of stakeholders – pre, during and post mission;
   f. analytical tools used (e.g., problem tree); and
   g. use of local consultants input.

3. Based on the findings make specific recommendations to improve the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of the Diagnostic Missions, including post-mission follow up actions.

Proposed Review Approach

1. For the review and assessment of all the Diagnostic Missions conducted, the Consultants shall develop a structured questionnaire for circulation to the countries concerned. For six selected countries, field visits will be conducted and National Experts will assist International Consultants in the assessment. For countries not selected for field visits, the assessment will be performed through the responses to the questionnaires and eventually through telephone calls or other electronic means. Questionnaires may also be developed for team leaders and members of the Diagnostic Missions who conducted the missions earlier, and record the findings;

2. Prepare Terms of Reference for the National Experts to be engaged by ITTO for the six case studies to assist the International Consultants, and also for National Experts in countries not selected for detailed field assessment;

3. Provide guidance, review and supervise the work of the National Experts in selected countries,

including for local arrangements/logistics by the National Experts and governments' counterparts, as necessary, for the field visits of the International Consultant(s);

4. Undertake field visits to six ITTO Member countries that have benefited from the Diagnostic Missions, selected in consultation with the Executive Director, and perform an in-depth assessment on the validity, efficiency and effectiveness of the Diagnostic Missions, as outlined in the above paragraphs (e), (f) and (g); and

5. Review and finalize the "proposed work schedule" on Annex III.

ANNEX 2

Terms of Reference for Diagnostic Missions

The Terms of Reference of a Diagnostic Mission to any country will be to:

1. Identify the factors that are most critical in preventing the attainment of sustainable forest management in that country.

2. Assemble these constraints in order of importance.

3. Recommend a sequence of actions to remove the constraints, providing cost estimates whenever possible.

Notes of Guidance

The principles underlying the Diagnostic Missions are these:

1. In any situation, there is usually one factor that is most crucial in preventing progress. Until this constraint is removed, no progress is possible on any other front. But, once this first constraint is removed, there may be another that, in its turn, limits progress. Etc.

2. The objective of the Diagnostic Mission is to identify these constraints, to arrange them in a sequence and recommend appropriate action.

3. The exact procedures for the Mission will depend upon the circumstances in the country concerned. It should, however, include:

    a. Discussion with government ministers and senior members of the department responsible for forests, land use and trade.
    b. Discussion with forest managers and representatives of the timber trade.
    c. Discussion with the principal NGOs concerned with forest questions.
    d. Examination of the National Forestry Action Plan.
    e. Visits to selected forest areas and forest industries that illustrate particular problems or opportunities.

4. The important constraints are likely to lie in Criterion 1 of the National Level Criteria and Indicators, and particularly in the subjects dealt with in Indicators 1.1 to 1.5.

5. The following questions may be found helpful in defining the subject areas in which constraints may be found. It is NOT intended that the Mission should provide answers to all these questions.

    Policy. Is there a national land use policy? Is there a national policy for the sustainable management of a permanent forest estate? If not, why?

    Extent. What area of natural forest is managed for the sustainable production of timber?

    Allocation. Is there a satisfactory system for choosing, demarcating and protecting those areas that will be used as production forest? If not, why?
    Is there a satisfactory system for choosing, demarcating and protecting those areas that will be used as protection/conservation forest? If not, why?
    Are there pressures from other sectors or interests to remove productive forest from forest use? What measures are being taken to counter or divert these pressures?

    Sociological and economic conditions. In what ways do the various people who have an interest in or are affected by the management of the forest, benefit from this management or suffer from mismanagement (people dwelling in or near the forest, loggers, middlemen, wood processors, small industries, the Forest Authority, consumers generally, other government revenues)? Are the benefits adequate to provide an incentive to good management? Is there equitable distribution of these benefits? If not, why?

Management. Are there any management plans guiding timber production? Are the objectives of management conducive to sustainable production? Are the management prescriptions appropriate for the particular forest type? Are they rigorously applied and reviewed? If not, why?

Pre-exploitation survey. How comprehensive and adequate is the pre-exploitation survey: choice and marking of trees for felling; analysis of trees to remain unfelled; existing regeneration; environmental conditions; routing of extraction roads? If inadequate, why is this so?

Choice of exploiters. Does the choice take into account the best long-term interests of the forest? How?

Conditions of exploitation. Do these bring reasonable benefits to the various parties concerned: government revenues, any reforestation fund, the logging companies, local contractors, logging labour, those with customary rights in the land?
Are the conditions of exploitation such as to encourage long-term investment in the sustainable management of the forest? Are there reasonable incentives to encourage good management? What proportion of revenues is returned to forest management? If these conditions are not met, what prevents it?

Quality of exploitation. Are there guidelines for the siting, construction and maintenance of extraction roads, weather in which exploitation should not take place, equipment to be used, directional felling, cutting of lianes etc.? Are such guidelines followed? If not, why?
Are the above conditions monitored during and after exploitation? How? How well?

Post-exploitation survey and treatment. Are there guidelines? Are they sensitive to different forest types? Are they adhered to? Is later performance monitored? How? If not, why?

Control. Is there effective control of operations at all stages? If not, why?

Follow-up. Are there arrangements for monitoring and reviewing prescriptions? If not, why?

Research. Is research designed to support sustainable timber production from natural forest? Is it adequate to provide the necessary information to answer the questions set out above? Are there permanent sample plots to provide the data upon which sustainable yield can be calculated? Are the data processed and made available to management within a reasonable time?

Education and training. Are sufficient trained staff at all levels being produced with qualifications in the skills needed in natural forest management?