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REPORT OF PROJECTS AND PRE-PROJECTS IN PROGRESS

ECONOMIC INFORMATION AND MARKET INTELLIGENCE

[A] Projects and Pre-Projects under Implementation

7. PD 620/11 Rev.1 (M) Development and Implementation of a Species Identification and Timber Tracking System in Africa with DNA Fingerprints and Stable Isotopes (Germany)

Budget and Source of Funding:

Total Budget:	US$	2,046,274
Government of Germany:	US$	1,695,342
Government of USA:	US$	100,000
Government of Australia:	US$	30,000
Implementing Agency:	US$	220,932

Implementing Agency: Johann Heinrich von Thünen Institute (vTI)

Council Session Approved: Forty-seventh (La Antigua, Guatemala, 2011)

Starting Date: January 2008

Duration: Planned: 36 months
To date: 9 months

Although many legal instruments (EU timber trade regulation, US Lacey Act etc.) have been established to combat illegal logging and trade in illegally sourced timber, practical control mechanisms to identify tree species and geographic origin of wood and wood products are still lacking. The project will develop a species identification and timber tracking system with DNA fingerprints and stable isotopes for three important timber tree species in seven African countries, namely Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo, Gabon, Ghana and Kenya. The primary project focus is on the three target species chosen by timber producing country representatives, i.e., iroko (*Miliciaexcelsa, M. regia*), sapelli (*Entandrophragma cylindricum*) and ayous (*Triplochiton scleroxylon*). For these species, samples will be collected across their distribution area for the development of gene markers. The samples will be screened for DNA fingerprints and stable isotopes and provide a genetic and chemical reference database to control the country of origin. Using DNA-fingerprints, a tree by tree approach to control the chain of custody will be applied for ayous and sapelli in cooperation with the Forestry Commission and the Forest Research Institute and timber companies in Ghana and Cameroon. Tools to identify the species will be further developed using both a wood anatomical approach and the DNA barcoding for 20 important African timber species. Technical support will be provided to three selected reference laboratories in West-Africa (Kumasi, Ghana), Central-Africa (Libreville, Gabon) and East-Africa (Nairobi, Kenya). Staff of these laboratories and particularly also from the other participating groups will be trained to apply DNA-techniques and wood anatomy to identify the tree species and to perform standard DNA tests to check the origin. The results of the project will be provided to the international coordination office for tree identification and origin assignment at Bioversity International in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The project involves 14 collaborating agencies in Europe, Africa and Australia. Initialized through the pre-project under TFLET, the project will continue to seek additional funds to enlarge the scope and number of species investigated.

The project has officially commenced on 1 February 2012. The technical coordinator of the project, Mr. Zoewinde Henri Bouda has commenced his work on 16 April 2012. The following activities have been implemented and/or completed:

- The project kick-off meeting was held in Kumasi, Ghana from 22-23 May 2012, attended by forty-one participants including representatives from five participating countries. The representatives from Cameroon and the Central African Republic could not attend the meeting. The meeting was followed by a field visit to a forest concession managed by SAMARTEX in western Ghana, which provided the opportunity to see ongoing logging operations and a demonstration of cambium sampling from Sapelli and Iroko trees. A television team working for the German channel “NDR” joined the meeting and the fieldtrip for a report on illegal logging.
- The sampling for the markers development of Iroko, Sapelli and Ayous has been initiated.
- MoUs have been signed between the Executing Agency and several project partners including University of Liège, Belgium; Forestry Research Institute of Ghana (FORIG); Plant Genetic Diagnostics GmbH (PGD), Germany; University of Adelaide, Australia; and the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI).
- The first training workshop with emphasis on the application of molecular genetic markers for timber tracking in Africa will be held at KEFRI, Nairobi, Kenya in March 2013.
- The first project PSC meeting will be held at the vTI, Grosshansdorf, Germany, 15-16 October 2012.

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