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**Report on the Implementation of the
Joint ITTO – CBD Collaborative Initiative for
Tropical Forest Biodiversity**

Joint ITTO – CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity: Achievements to Date

Background

In the framework of the International Year of Biodiversity 2010 and the International Year of Forests 2011, the Secretariat of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) and the Secretariat of the Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 2 March 2010 to strengthen collaboration in the pursuit of their common objectives of conserving and sustainably managing tropical forest resources. In October and December 2010, respectively, the governing bodies of CBD and ITTC adopted Decisions welcoming the ITTO/CBD collaboration (Decision X/36 and ITTC Decision 6 (XLVI)).

A key purpose of the MoU between the ITTO and CBD secretariats is to identify, develop and implement targeted joint activities on forests and biodiversity, with involvement of the other relevant organizations, including the development of an ITTO support programme for the implementation of the CBD programme of work on forest biodiversity in ITTO producer member countries (subsequently referred to as the Joint ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity).

The programme document that is the basis for concrete project activities under the Joint ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity is available in English, French and Spanish and can be downloaded from both the CBD and ITTO websites.¹

Objectives and outputs

The overall objective of the Joint ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity is to enhance biodiversity conservation in tropical forests with the direct participation of local stakeholders, addressing the main drivers of biodiversity loss in tropical forests: deforestation and forest degradation. More specifically, the Initiative provides support to ITTO producer member countries to reduce losses of biodiversity through the implementation of the CBD Programme of Work on Forest Biodiversity, focusing on the common objectives of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and the ITTO Action Plan.

This Initiative aims to achieve four key outputs, with the assistance of donors and with the close collaboration of partners in producer member countries:

1. Enhanced local capacity for biodiversity conservation in production forests and for the rehabilitation of degraded and secondary forests;
2. Improved conservation and management of protected areas, especially in association with buffering protected areas, and transboundary conservation;
3. Safeguarding tropical forest biodiversity in forestry interventions, including in REDD+ related projects; and
4. Improved welfare of local communities and indigenous groups through biodiversity conservation and sustainable use of natural resources.

¹ CBD: <http://www.cbd.int/forest/doc/cbd-itto-initiative-programme-document.en.pdf>

ITTO: [http://www.itto.int/documents_detail/contents_type=598 ITTC\(XLVII\)/11 ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative to Conserve Tropical Forests](http://www.itto.int/documents_detail/contents_type=598_ITTC(XLVII)/11_ITTO/CBD_Collaborative_Initiative_to_Conserve_Tropical_Forests)

These expected outputs of the Initiative are to be achieved through the promotion of sustainable forest management (SFM), with a particular emphasis on biodiversity protection; forest monitoring and adaptive management to generate multiple benefits on a sustainable basis; protection against invasive species; and enhancing the value of natural tropical forests to avoid land use change.

Focus on production and protection forests

The Initiative focuses both on production and protection forests. Scientists estimate that tropical forests host about two thirds of all terrestrial species. Promoting the establishment of protected areas, especially in forests of high conservation value including transboundary areas, is still required to meet the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 global target for 17% of terrestrial areas protected. Considering that only 13% of the world's forests are currently located in protected areas, it is essential to also promote the conservation and sustainable use of forest biodiversity outside of protected areas. The conservation and sustainable management of tropical forests in general, buffer zones of protected areas in particular, are necessary for improving livelihoods of local communities and avoid encroachment of the core conservation areas. The consumption of main timber products (roundwood, sawnwood, pulp, paper) is expected to increase over the next 30 years. The use of solid biofuels for electricity production could be three times larger by 2030 than current levels (UNEP/CBD/SBSTTA/13/3). Globally, by 2050, the demand for industrial roundwood is expected to increase by 50 to 75%. The **ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests (2009)** reflect the clear importance in promoting biodiversity conservation outside protected areas, through the long-term sustainable use of forest resources for the sustainable livelihoods of local communities. Also, the **ITTO Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests (2002)** provides the elements to recover the biodiversity conservation capacity of degraded forests in the tropics. These ITTO guidelines are complementary to, and entirely support the CBD forest programme of work, providing guidance for the field implementation of the Initiative.

Operational Procedures

ITTO leads the implementation of the Initiative in close consultation with the CBD Secretariat, donors, other partners and especially the beneficiary countries. Interested countries may submit a concept note to the ITTO Secretariat indicating their intention to develop a project or specific activity in the framework of this Initiative. The CBD Secretariat and ITTO Secretariat will assess the pertinence of the request together with the relevant stakeholders of the proposing country and will support the formulation of a full project proposal (if required) and fund raising. Donors may allocate funds to a specific project of the Initiative, or as an un earmarked contribution to the Initiative.

Budget

The Collaborative Initiative has an estimated budget of \$US15 million for the initial period of 4 years, covering the three tropical regions of ITTO. The implementation of the Initiative benefits from the experience ITTO has gained in implementing projects and programs in the tropics (over 1,000 projects, pre-projects and activities in the last 25 years, amounting to ca. US\$400,000,000). Also, the ITTO/CBD Initiative benefits from the experience gained in ITTO Programme development, including the CITES/ITTO Programme since 2007; and the ITTO Thematic Programs being currently implemented on a pilot basis. The Initiative also builds on the experiences implementing the Programme of Work on Protected Areas.

Project applications

Government agencies in countries that are members of the International Tropical Timber Organization should direct inquiries to rfm@itto.int

More information is also available at <http://www.itto.int>

Funded projects

To date, nine projects under this Initiative are being piloted for a total investment of over US\$ 13 million, of which donor governments such as Japan, Switzerland, Belgium, USA and the Republic of Korea have contributed a total of US\$ 9,441,972. An outline and the current status of these nine projects are as follows:

1. Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Tropical Rainforests and Biodiversity Conservation in the ITTO Congo Basin Countries

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F)

ITTO Budget: US\$4, 408,557

Beneficiary countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon & Republic of Congo

Executing Agency: Network of Central African Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions (*Réseau Régional des Institutions de Formation Forestière et Environnementale d'Afrique Centrale* - RIFFEAC)

Inception date: April 2012

Overall, this five-year project (2012-2017) will contribute to building human resources capacities required to achieve sustainable forest ecosystem management in the Congo basin by reconciling social economic imperatives and the maintenance of ecological balances. More specifically, it aims to build the capacities of environmental and forestry training institutions in Central Africa to ensure they are capable to train personnel qualified to implement sustainable forest management, while ensuring the biodiversity conservation in the Congo Basin.

Progress in project implementation can be summarized as follows:

- The Executing Agency (RIFFEAC Secretariat) continues the consultation and sensitization campaigns in order to ensure the involvement of all seven RIFFEAC training institutions (CRESA-Yaounde in Cameroon, ENEF-Libreville in Gabon, ENEF-Mbal Mayo in Cameroon, ERAIFT-Kinshasa in Democratic Republic of Congo, IDR-Brazzaville in Republic of Congo, ISDR-Mbaiki in Central African Republic and University of Dschang in Cameroon) involved in the project;
- The University of Laval and CERFOR Technical Forestry Centre of Canada, have been selected for the elaboration of six reference training modules/programmes and associated teaching methodologies, in close collaboration with all seven RIFFEAC training institutions; and
- The drafts of six reference training modules/programmes and associated teaching methodologies have been circulated among experts of RIFFEAC training institutions, for technical comments and inputs, prior to the holding of a validation workshop which should gather experts from the RIFFEAC training institutions.

Overall, the project is currently developing the draft training modules in a participatory manner among professors in the region, and once completed and validated, will be internalized in the curriculums of the forestry and environmental schools established in the Congo Basin.

For greater details on the current implementation of this project's activities, please refer to the section on PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F) in document CRF (XLVIII)/7 Report on Project and Pre-Project Work in Progress in the Field of Reforestation and Forest Management.

2. Management of the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex to Promote Cooperation for Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation Between Thailand, Cambodia and Laos

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 577/10 Rev.1 (F)

ITTO Budget: US\$ 2,051,039

Beneficiary countries: Cambodia & Thailand

Executing Agencies: The Forestry Administration of Cambodia together with Royal Forest Department of Thailand.

Inception date: August 2012

Overall, this three-year project (2012-2015) envisages conserving forest biodiversity in the Emerald Triangle Protected Forests Complex situated between Thailand, Cambodia and Lao PDR, under the framework of a trans-boundary biodiversity conservation area (TBCA). The Emerald Triangle has some of the most extensive unfragmented natural forests in Southeast Asia containing large numbers of globally threatened species as a last refuge for sixteen "Critically Endangered" and "Endangered" species from the IUCN Red List. Specifically, the project aims to strengthen the protection of trans-boundary habitats of the endangered wide-ranging wildlife species in the Emerald Triangle.

This project became operational in August 2012, and to date, both beneficiary countries are already collecting and exchanging information on wildlife distribution between themselves and are planning joint research activities on the regional biodiversity.

Progress in project implementation can be summarized as follows:

Cambodian component:

- An assessment of land use and carbon stocks in the Preah Vihear Protected Forest (PVPF) has been carried out.
- An assessment of wildlife distribution in and around PVPF, especially along the borders with Lao PDR and Thailand to understand the distribution of key wildlife landscape species in the border areas between the three countries has been finished;
- A presentation on Emerald Triangle Trans-boundary Biodiversity Conservation was made at the ITTO/JICA/Birdlife Side Event on "Collaborative approach to forest-related Aichi Targets" during UN CBD COP 11 held in Hyderabad, India in October 2012;
- Law enforcement patrols in PVPF and in its surrounding areas are periodically carried out in cooperation with military police and provincial military officers since January 2013.
- Meetings have been organized with relevant stakeholders on law enforcement activities.
- The local Forestry Administration, local communities and other stakeholders have been trained in GIS mapping, land-use planning, and forest management planning;
- Information on sustainable livelihoods based on forest and biodiversity resources conservation has been collected through meetings in targeted local communities;
- Local community fora and networks were facilitated so as to enhance biodiversity conservation with the aim of establishing a strong network between local community committees, the Preah Vihear Forestry Administration Cantonment staff and NGOs.

Thai component:

- Wildlife distribution data in the project area is being collected regularly by the staff of the wildlife sanctuaries, Department of National Parks;
- The information system on biodiversity conservation inside and outside protected areas in the country continues to be periodically maintained and updated;
- Collaboration continues with forest protection units in order to prevent wildlife poaching, illegal logging, illegal trading and the collection of wild plants;
- A Joint Task Force meeting and other stakeholder meetings have been organized for transboundary biodiversity conservation cooperation and for analyzing future land use changes;
- Outreach programmes are being conducted in local schools and communities to raise awareness on conservation benefits associated with TBCA.

For greater details on the current implementation of the project's activities, please refer to the section on PD 577/10 Rev.1 (F) in document CRF (XLVIII)/7 Report on Project and Pre-Project Work in Progress in the Field of Reforestation and Forest Management.

3. Building Capacities of ACTO Member Countries in Ecologically Responsible Forest Management and Biodiversity Conservation in Managed Forests of the Amazon

ITTO Ref. No.:	PP-A/47-266
ITTO Budget:	US\$1,320,224
Beneficiary countries:	Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, Guyana, Peru, Suriname, Venezuela
Executing Agency:	Amazon Cooperation Treaty Organization (ACTO)
Inception date:	July 2013

The project intends to enhance biodiversity conservation and strengthen environmental guidelines in managed forests across the Amazon Region. Specifically, the project aims at establishing an interdisciplinary process for building and delivering the technical capacity necessary for implementing ecologically responsible forest management in public and private production forests of the Amazon region.

Currently the 8 ACTO member countries are defining the details of the project's activities in order to initiate its implementation on the ground. These are to be concreted at the first steering committee meeting to be tentatively held in November 2013.

For greater details on the current implementation of this project's activities, please refer to the section on PD 577/10 Rev.1 (F) in document CRF (XLVIII)/7 Report on Project and Pre-Project Work in Progress in the Field of Reforestation and Forest Management.

4. Study for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on RAMSAR Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin

ITTO Ref. No.:	PPD 165/12 Rev.1 (F)
ITTO Budget:	US\$79,380
Beneficiary countries:	Benin
Executing Agency:	Ce.Sa.Re.N
Inception date:	25 April 2013

This 8-month pre-project aims to contribute to the sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity in Benin by building the capacity of local communities to improve their living conditions, through the conservation of sacred forests part of Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018. This pre-project will contribute to address the lack of the necessary information and data required for the preparation of a project dealing with the sustainable forest management and conservation of biodiversity of those sacred forests.

Progress in pre-project implementation can be summarized as follows:

- The consultation and sensitization campaigns have been initiated in order to ensure the involvement of relevant stakeholders of the Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 which have multiple functions (religious, ecological, socio-economic, cultural, etc.); and
- Appropriate studies and surveys (socio-economic, environmental, cultural, mapping, etc.) are being carried out in the target area of the future project.

5. Promoting Biodiversity Conservation in Betung Kerihun National Park (BKNP) as the Trans-boundary Ecosystem between Indonesia and State of Sarawak Malaysia - Phase III

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 617/11 Rev.4 (F)

ITTO Budget: US\$941,559

Beneficiary country: Indonesia

Executing Agency: Betung Kerihun National (BKNP), Directorate General of Forest Protection and Nature Conservation (PHKA), Ministry of Forestry (MOF)

Inception date: October 2013

Overall, this 4-year project (2013-2017) aims to promote sustainable conservation management of the Betung Kerihun National Park (BKNP) established in 1992 covering around 800,000 ha, as a transboundary ecosystem between Indonesia and Malaysia (Sarawak). The project will focus on more strong transboundary cooperation with Sarawak for enhancing commonly shared ecosystems and other conservation concerns.

The project's transboundary conservation cooperation is focused with the Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary (LEWS) and the Batang Ai National Park (BANP) in Sarawak sites which are adjacent to BKNP in Indonesia. The project will be implemented by BKNP in collaboration with many stakeholders including WWF-Indonesia in order to ensure the conservation of the integrity of BKNP's biodiversity values. The project activities include establishing a joint task force for the efficient implementation of TBCA with the participation of representatives from LEWS and BANP. The expected outputs of the project are: (1) cooperation between Indonesia and Malaysia for the conservation of transboundary ecosystem between BKNP and BANP/LEWS is maintained/strengthened; (2) operational/ Work plan on biodiversity conservation of transboundary ecosystem is formulated; and (3) sustainable livelihoods of the local communities within and surrounding BKNP improved.

6. Buffer Zone Management for Pulong Tau National Park with Involvement of Local Communities in Management, Sarawak, Malaysia

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 635/12 Rev.2 (F)

ITTO Budget: US\$ 517,450

Beneficiary countries: Malaysia
Executing Agency: Forest Department of Sarawak
Inception date: November 2013

The project was approved under Autumn 2012 Project Cycle and was financed at ITTC-47 in November 2012. The draft project agreement was sent out to the Ministry of Primary Industries and Commodities Malaysia in January 2013. The draft agreement has been reviewed by the Attorney General Chamber of Malaysia. Since such an important review has been recently finalized, it is expected that the Executing Agency will start the implementation of project activities in November 2013.

The establishment and management of buffer zones in national parks and wildlife sanctuaries has been weak as currently Sarawak's National Parks and Nature Reserves Ordinance (1998) and Wild Life Protection Ordinance (1998) do not provide for any guidance. As rapid economic development activities continue to expand into rural areas causing more natural forests to be disturbed, nature conservation will be more challenging as resource-rich totally protected forests may become vulnerable to illegal encroachment.

In light of the importance of sustainably managing the Pulong Tau National Park (PTNP), this 2-year project (2013-2015) aims to facilitate the establishment of a 6,000 ha buffer zone and securing a forest base to meet the communities' needs. It is to study the multiple functions of buffer zones for environmental services like watershed protection, biodiversity conservation and research, and communal use. Guidelines for buffer zone management will be developed and submitted to the State Government for consideration. The project's outputs and activities will involve baseline surveys to determine the buffer zone's resources for integrated management, assessing local subsistence needs and how the buffer zone will be able to provide these needs. Local involvement in management will include development of non-timber forest products, handicrafts and ecotourism, for which training will be given. The project objectives and outputs will be met through integrated buffer zone management, training, and active involvement of primary and secondary stakeholders. The project will be sustained by Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) through its Community Service Initiative Unit (CSIU).

7. Integrated Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in the Tacaná Volcano and Its Range of Influence in Mexico and Guatemala

ITTO Ref. No.: PD 668/12 Rev.1 (F)
ITTO Budget: US\$ 641,638.80
Beneficiary countries: Guatemala and Mexico
Executing Agency: HELVETAS SWISS INTERCOOPERATION (HSI)
Inception date: TBD

Guatemala and Mexico share the Tacaná Volcano border area which straddles the Department of San Marcos and the State of Chiapas respectively, an area in the Mesoamerican Biodiversity Corridor, featuring biological richness and ecotourism potential although most of the population lives in poverty, using natural resources unsustainably. An initiative was developed for sustainable development in the protected areas of the Tacaná Volcano border area, based on coordinated actions, a study of the situation and various exchanges between regional representatives of Mexican and Guatemalan Government institutions, civil society and the Swiss organization HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.

The objective of this project is to contribute to improving the living standards for 28,000 people in both countries, based on the conservation and sustainable use of local natural

resources. More specifically, it will launch a participatory process for natural resource and biodiversity management, conservation and use in the Tacaná Volcano and its range of influence in Guatemala and Mexico. The project begins with an initial two-year phase to establish the foundations of joint work with the community, men and women, with pilot activities including forest management, diversification of economic opportunities, upgrade of the legal framework of Protected Areas and enhancement of collaboration between both countries.

Expected outputs are as follows: i) Pilot areas for restoration or conservation have been established in a participatory manner; ii) Pilot projects identified and established with the community, to enhance local livelihood, including: ecotourism, agro-forestry and livestock-forestry systems; iii) The technical and legal framework for integrated management in Tacaná Volcano has been updated; and iv) Local communities, Municipal Councils and public bodies share information, take decisions by consensus and are actively involved in the Guatemala – Mexico Binational Cooperation.

Additional projects are currently being developed and under consideration for funding, as follows:

“Building the capacities for biodiversity conservation in Trans-boundary Conservation Areas (TBCAs) in the Congo Basin countries through SFM practices and the use of satellite and radar imagery” submitted by COMIFAC with an ITTO Budget of US\$ 5,539,162

“Capacity Building for Strengthening Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation of the Taninthayi Range in Myanmar” submitted by the Government of Myanmar with an ITTO budget of US\$3,093,976 (ITTO Ref. No.: PD 723/13 Rev.1 (F))

“Strengthening Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation in the Biosphere Reserve of Northwestern Peru” submitted by the Government of Peru with an ITTO budget of US\$496,290 (ITTO Ref. No.: PD 601/11 Rev.3 (F))

“Study for the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of the Mangrove Forests in the Coastal Area of Benin” submitted by the Government of Benin with an ITTO budget of US\$72,900 (ITTO Ref. No.: PPD 160/12 Rev.1 (F))

Conclusion

Overall, the significant progress made in the collaboration between the Convention on Biological Diversity and the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) through the implementation of nine projects covering 20 countries in the three tropical regions of the world, within the framework of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity, is already visibly contributing towards the achievement of the **Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020**, and in particular, the following Forestry-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets:

Target 5: By 2020, the rate of loss of all natural habitats, including forests, is at least halved and where feasible brought close to zero, and degradation and fragmentation is significantly reduced;

Target 7: By 2020 areas under agriculture, aquaculture and forestry are managed sustainably, ensuring conservation of biodiversity;

Target 11: By 2020, at least 17 per cent of terrestrial and inland water, and 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem services, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes; and

Target 15: By 2020, ecosystem resilience and the contribution of biodiversity to carbon stocks has been enhanced, through conservation and restoration, including restoration of at least 15 per cent of degraded ecosystems, thereby contributing to climate change mitigation and adaptation and to combating desertification.

However, it should be further noted that the budget of this Collaborative Initiative for its first 4 years still falls short of its target, and therefore we reiterate our invitation to Parties, other Governments and relevant organizations to further support the Initiative, including through financial contributions.

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