



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
TIMBER COUNCIL**

JOINT SESSION OF THE COMMITTEES

Distr.
GENERAL

ITTC-JC(XLVII)/2
8 October 2013

ENGLISH ONLY

FORTY-SEVENTH SESSION
25-30 November 2013
Libreville, Gabon

**ITTO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND
ACTION PLAN**

DRAFT REPORT

Prepared by
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October 2013

Introduction

Knowledge is embedded in project teams and project partners of ITTO, who work in areas of forest management and conservation, forest industry, timber and NTFPs trade, and on issues linked to community development, biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, SME development, etc. In recognition of the need to strengthen knowledge generation, exchange and learning among ITTO stakeholders, the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 considered the development of a knowledge management (KM) strategy and guidelines as a priority.

In order to develop an ITTO strategic KM framework and guidelines the ITTC proposed the engagement of two consultants. The consultants would be required to develop an integrated strategy that would illustrate how ITTO will be more agile in nurturing and tapping into relevant knowledge that is generated on an ongoing basis and improving its systems and its institutional readiness for continuous learning and sharing.

In preparing the knowledge management strategy, the consultants are expected to consult widely both within and outside ITTO, conduct a baseline assessment of ITTO's current knowledge management context, gather and understand the kind of lessons learned, learn from efforts of other institutions and, obtain and incorporate guidance from them as appropriate.

The consultants were engaged by the ITTO Secretariat in May 2013 to assist ITTO's Executive Director to develop a Knowledge Management Strategy and Guidelines for ITTO over the period May-December 2013. The Terms of Reference (ToR) for each consultant and the ITTC Decision creating the KM Strategy activity are appended below.

Methodological Notes

From the beginning, the consultants consciously combined a long-standing familiarity and engagement with ITTO (Lead Consultant), and a deep understanding of the evolution and prevailing wisdom in the field of Knowledge Management for Development (Team Leader), with an approach that strove to engage ITTO Secretariat staff and other stakeholders in reflections on ITTO's mandate, its working modalities and their significance to the development of a Knowledge Management Strategy.

The purpose was not only to derive a multi-dimensional appreciation of the context and possible solutions, but to also begin a longer-term process of KM strategy elaboration that would ultimately be ***driven by the people and institutions who are most crucial to its success***. This is an important step at early stages of this process, which is intended to begin bearing fruit in 2014 and reach a level of early maturation in the 2015-2018 Strategic Action Plan period.

The main elements of the consultants' work included:

1) **Elaborating a research agenda with the Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation Officer of the ITTO Secretariat.**

This agenda included:

- a. A one-week intensive exploration of the current ITTO context, including: staff interviews; a knowledge asset workshop, briefings on IT infrastructure and core information management and communications processes; and gathering and documenting relevant background information;
- b. A review of existing knowledge management strategy documents of relevance, including knowledge management best practices, knowledge management strategies and/or plans of other organizations (e.g. World Health Organization - WHO, Global Environment Facility - GEF, International Fund for Agriculture Development - IFAD, United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization - FAO, International Labor Organization - ILO, Pan American Health Organization - PAHO, and others);
- c. A review of the relevant ITTC discussions and decisions on knowledge management and other ITTO documents.

2) Gathering feedback on KM-related issues from key ITTO stakeholders

ITTO producer and consumer member countries, members of various Committees, implementing partners, consultants and others were contacted. This was done through:

- a. An online survey covering main areas of ITTO's knowledge and learning work, made available to all key stakeholders;

The survey was carried out in the three languages of the organization, and 91 responses were received. The responses were analyzed and findings were summarized.

- b. A specific bilateral survey sent to Committee Chairs, Producer and Consumer countries representatives, consultants and others.

More than twenty persons were contacted and eight responses were obtained.

3) Elaborating a draft KM Strategy and Action Plan based on the above work and state of the art in KM for Development.

Based on the findings and experience, the consultants prepared a draft report that included the proposed Knowledge Management Strategy and Action Plan. The draft report was submitted to the ITTO Secretariat in the last week of July 2013 for circulation for comments of ITTO member countries and ITTO Secretariat staff members.

The comments are expected to be available by the end of August 2013 and will be considered by the consultants and integrated, as appropriate into a revised document.

The proposed 'ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy and Action Plan' is presented in Annex 1.

Planned Additional Activities

Once feedback is received from ITTO member countries and ITTO Secretariat, the consultants will refine the draft and submit it to the ITTO Secretariat for inclusion in the documentation for the 49th ITTC meeting in November 2013.

The Team Leader will then present the KM Strategy and Action Plan to attendees of the 49th ITTC meeting, and will participate in a Working Group to further develop the draft strategy in preparation for its adoption at that meeting and eventual implementation starting in 2014.

As an additional output, the consultants will prepare a draft article for the Tropical Forest Update and/or other publications on the ITTO website.

CONSULTANTS TERMS OF REFERENCE

Team Leader ToR

The HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation representative to implement the work under this agreement is Dr. Riff Fullan, Team leader Knowledge and Learning. The Consultant together with another Lead Consultant (Dr. Ivan Tomaselli) shall assist the Executive Director in the development of an ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy and Guidelines as approved by the 48th ITTC under Biennial Workplan 2013-2014 Activity No. 22. The Consultant will be Team Leader and shall undertake the assignments as described below and in the Terms of Reference in Annex I.

The responsibilities of the Consultant include *inter alia*, the following:

- Overall responsibility for the preparation of an ITTO Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy and Guidelines for the development of an integrated ITTO Knowledge Management System;
- Jointly with the Lead Consultant, review the international best practice of knowledge management;
- Jointly with the Lead Consultant, conduct a baseline assessment of the current ITTO knowledge and information management situation;
- In coordination with the Lead Consultant conduct a review and analysis of relevant ITTO documentation including (but not limited to) the ITTA 2006, ITTO Action Plan (current & past as appropriate), the report of the ITTO Meta Evaluation, the report of the evaluation of the TP pilot operation and other relevant documents/reports and/or Council Decisions
- In coordination with the Lead Consultant review and analyze relevant non-ITTO documentation, including knowledge management best practices, knowledge management strategies and/or plans of other organizations (e.g. WHO, GEF, IFAD etc.);
- Consult/coordinate on an ongoing basis with the ITTO Secretariat (contact person) regarding the preparation of the KM strategy and guidelines, and carry out a mission to the ITTO Secretariat in Yokohama, Japan for consultations and interviews with ITTO staff members. Such visit will also include consultation/discussions with technical staff implementing the new ITTO Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Phase 1 is supposed to commence in late May 2013);
- In coordination with the Lead Consultant consult widely within and outside ITTO with relevant stakeholders on the current ITTO knowledge and information management and their views and suggestions on the needs for the development of the envisaged integrated knowledge management system. Stakeholders include (but are not limited to), project teams/partners, Executing Agencies, members (past/current) of the ITTO Expert Panel and/or Thematic Programme Advisory Committees, ITTO Country Focal Points, consultants, CPF members, international agreements/organizations etc. This can include telephone/personal/email interviews and/or development and implementation of surveys as appropriate;
- In coordination with the Lead Consultant compile and analyze the responses received;
- Overall responsibility for the preparation of the (Draft) report on the preparation of the ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines (by 31 July 2013);
- Overall responsibility for the preparation of the (Draft) ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines for the development of an integrated KM system for circulation to ITTO member countries and ITTO Secretariat staff members (by 31 July 2013);
- Overall responsibility for the compilation and analysis of the comments received on the report and KM Strategy and Guidelines and integrate as appropriate into a revised document (Member Comments expected to be received by 31 August 2013);
- Submit the final (Draft) report and the final (Draft) ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy and Plan to the ITTO Secretariat to be posted for consideration by the 49th ITTC (by 30 September 2013);
- Attend the 49th ITTC, to be held in Libreville, Gabon, 25-30 November 2013 and make a PowerPoint presentation on (the development of) the ITTO Knowledge;
- Management Strategy and Guidelines for the development of an integrated KM system.
- Participate in a Working Group (to be established & operating during Council) on the ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines;
- Support by the Lead Consultant, finalize the ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines, integrating as appropriate the comments received during Council 49th ITTC (by 31 December 2013);
- As requested by the ITTO Secretariat, prepare a (draft) article for publication in the ITTO TFU magazine (and/or other publications or the ITTO website)

Lead Consultant ToR

The Consultant, together with the Team Leader (Dr. Riff Fullan, HELVETAS Swiss Cooperation) shall assist the Executive Director in the development of an ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy and Guidelines as approved by the 48th session of the ITTC under Biennial Workplan 2013-2014, Activity No. 22. The Consultant will be Lead Consultant and shall undertake the assignments as described below and in the Terms of Reference in Annex I.

The responsibilities of the Consultant include *inter alia*, the following:

- Jointly with the Team Leader review the international best practice of knowledge management;
- Jointly with the Team Leader conduct a baseline assessment of the current ITTO knowledge and information management situation;
- In coordination with the Team Leader conduct a review and analysis of relevant ITTO documentation including (but not limited to) the ITTA 2006, ITTO Action Plan (current & past as appropriate), the report of the ITTO Meta Evaluation, the report of the evaluation of the TP pilot operation and other relevant documents/reports and/or Council Decisions
- In coordination with the Team Leader review and analyze relevant non-ITTO documentation, including knowledge management best practices, knowledge management strategies and/or plans of other organizations (e.g. WHO, GEF, IFAD etc.);
- Consult/coordinate on an ongoing basis with the ITTO Secretariat (contact person) regarding the preparation of the KM strategy and guidelines, and carry out a mission to the ITTO Secretariat in Yokohama, Japan for consultations and interviews with ITTO staff members. Such visit will also include consultation/discussions with technical staff implementing the new ITTO Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system (Phase 1 is supposed to commence in late May 2013);
- In coordination with the Team Leader consult widely within and outside ITTO with relevant stakeholders on the current ITTO knowledge and information management and their views and suggestions on the needs for the development of the envisaged integrated knowledge management system. Stakeholders include (but are not limited to), project teams/partners, Executing Agencies, members (past/current) of the ITTO Expert Panel and/or Thematic Programme Advisory Committees, ITTO Country Focal Points, consultants, CPF members, international agreements/organizations etc. This can include telephone/personal/email interviews and/or development and implementation of surveys as appropriate;
- In coordination with the Team Leader compile and analyze the responses received;
- Support the Team Leader in the preparation of the (Draft) report on the preparation of the ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines (by 31 July 2013);
- In coordination with the Team Leader prepare the (Draft) ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines for the development of an integrated KM system for circulation to ITTO member countries and ITTO Secretariat staff members (by 31 July 2013);
- In coordination with the Team Leader compile and analyze the comments received on the report and KM Strategy and Guidelines and integrate as appropriate into a revised document (Member Comments expected to be received by 31 August 2013);
In coordination with the Team Leader finalize the ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines, integrating as appropriate the comments received during Council 49th ITTC (by 31 December 2013);
- As requested by the ITTO Secretariat, prepare a (draft) article for publication in the ITTO TFU magazine (and/or other publications or the ITTO website.

Activity No. 22

**DEVELOP AN ITTO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY AND
KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT GUIDELINES**

[ITTA, 2006, Articles 1 (c), (r)]
[ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018, Strategic Priority 5]

I. Background

In fulfilling its mission, ITTO deals with a diversity of knowledge and the most critical knowledge is related to field practice through projects and thematic programmes. This knowledge is embedded in project teams and project partners who work in areas of forest management and conservation, forest industry, timber and NTFPs trade, and on issues linked to community development, biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, SME development, etc. The aim of this Activity is to develop a knowledge management strategy that makes knowledge a key deliverable of ITTO's action for improving its effectiveness in achieving its mission.

I. Description

Two consultants will be contracted to develop an ITTO strategic framework and guidelines required for developing an integrated knowledge management system which is *contributing to take advantage to use lessons learned and build modular learning approaches to further strengthen/improve the effectiveness of future project work*. The system will be robust enough to be used in a context of dramatic transformations that are changing the practices in forestry and in the use of forest products. The strategy will show how ITTO will be more agile in devising appropriate innovations and improving its systems and its institutional readiness for continuous learning and sharing.

In preparing the knowledge management strategy, the consultants will consult widely both within and outside ITTO, conduct a baseline assessment of ITTO's current knowledge situation; gather and understand the kind of lessons learned, learn from efforts of other institutions and obtain and incorporate guidance from them as appropriate.

The proposed knowledge management strategy must be based on three premises:

- a) Be firmly rooted in ITTO's core competencies
- b) Be embedded in its work processes; and
- c) Be closely linked to its priority areas of work

A three-day workshop of experts will be organized to discuss the proposed strategy. The report will be presented to the ITTC for discussion and decision

II. Expected Outputs

- a) Report
- b) ITTO knowledge management strategy
- c) ITTO knowledge management system

- IV. Target Countries** Global
- V. Duration and Timing** 24 months
- VI. Budget** US\$ 150,000

Annex 1: ITTO KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

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Foreword

To be completed

Acknowledgements

We would like to express our deep appreciation to Mr Emmanuel Ze Meka, Executive Director of the International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) for giving us the opportunity to work with ITTO on the emerging issue of the effective implementation of knowledge management, and thereby contributing to ITTO's increased agility in devising appropriate innovations and improving its system and its institutional readiness for continuous learning and sharing.

We would like also to thank Dr Gerhard Breulmann for his invaluable assistance and technical support during our visit to the ITTO Office, for his thorough review of the draft reports, and for his expertise, which contributed to improving the quality of the final output. We also appreciate the inputs from other ITTO colleagues, and for their sincere and open sharing of their views on current knowledge management within ITTO during the interviews with ITTO staff, as well as for their constructive comments on the draft report.

We also wish to extend our gratitude to the focal points of ITTO member countries and other stakeholders, including project partners, executing agencies, members of the ITTO Expert Panel and Thematic Programme Advisory Committees, and Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) members, for their inputs that played an important role in providing relevant information on knowledge management and on best practices.

Finally, we would like to note our appreciation to all contributors not mentioned specifically here for their inputs which helped us finalize this KM Strategy and Action Plan.

Abbreviations and Acronyms

ADB	Asian Development Bank
CFME	Community Forest Management and Enterprises
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CPF	Collaborative Partnership on Forests
ERP	Enterprise Resource Planning
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GEF	Global Environment Facility
IFAD	International Fund for Agriculture Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
ITTA	International Tropical Timber Agreement
ITTC	International Tropical Timber Council
ITTO	International Tropical Timber Organization
KM	Knowledge Management
MP	Monitoring Protocol
NTFP	Non-timber forest product
OLMS	Online Monitoring System
PAHO	Pan American Health Organization
REDDES	Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services
SAP	Strategic Action Plan
SFM	Sustainable Forest Management
TPAC	Thematic Programme Advisory Committee
TFLET	Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade
TP	Thematic Programme
TPD	Thematic Programme Documents
TPP	Thematic Programme Profile
VPN	Virtual Private Network

Executive summary

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) Knowledge Management (KM) Strategy and Action Plan was created as a result of various discussions around KM for ITTO following the ITTA in 2006. These discussions culminated in an activity approved in the Biennial Work Programme 2013-2014 [Decision 2 (XLVIII), activity 22], aimed at creation of an ITTO KM Strategy and Guidelines¹.

This document is the first result of that activity. The document can be divided broadly into two segments, the first providing an overview and analysis of the current KM Context in ITTO (Chapters 1-3), and the second outlining an appropriate KM Strategy and Action Plan, and a set of general conclusions (Chapters 4-6).

In addition to describing the evolution of interest within ITTO around KM (especially over the past five years), Chapters 1-3 draw a picture of current KM-related areas of activity, starting with the following:

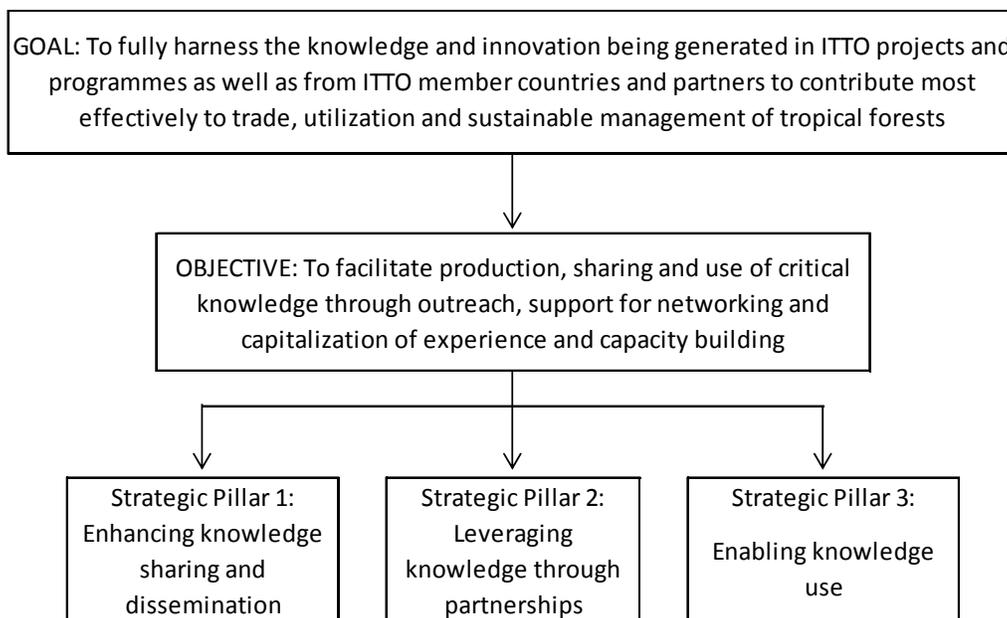
- 1) Managing production of documentation (in terms of both inputs and outputs), implementation of decisions and reporting related to ***proceedings of the ITTC***;
- 2) Managing processes related to ***contracting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on projects*** supported through the regular ITTO project cycle and the more recent Thematic Programmes (TPs), as well as fellowships awarded to individuals for tropical timber-related research activities;
- 3) Producing outputs on a regular basis related to tropical timber and sustainable forest management, including the ***Tropical Forest Update*** magazine, the biweekly ***Market Information Service***, and the statistical database, ***Annual Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation***.
- 4) Undertaking various additional activities identified in the ***Biennial Work Programme***, many of which have KM-related elements (see [KM elements of activities in the BWP 2013-2014](#) for more detail).

An examination of the IT infrastructure and core processes developed to support the above areas points to the following challenges of current ITTO practice as they relate to KM:

- 1) The ***management of information and workflow*** related to the projects and activities it monitors and reports on;
- 2) The effective ***capitalization of experience and learning*** that occurs in the implementation of ITTO projects/activities;
- 3) Making the large variety of ITTO ***information outputs readily accessible*** online;
- 4) The need to develop ***a strategic approach to KM***.

The second segment of the document (Chapters 4-6) takes these challenges in combination with ITTO's Mission and Strategic Priorities (as outlined in the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018) as the point of departure for developing an ITTO KM Strategy encapsulated by the following diagram:

¹ The term 'Action Plan' is used rather than 'guidelines' in this document, as it is felt that providing timelines and specific sets of activities (i.e. an action plan) for the implementation of the ITTO KM Strategy is the optimum format for guiding evolution of the KM Strategy.



In addition to the conceptual framework provided by the above goal, objective and strategic pillars, an integral part of the approach to development of the ITTO KM Strategy is that it is **iterative**. In other words, the strategy is not something that is created at a specific moment as a result of a conceptual framework derived from a limited piece of research.

The ITTO KM Strategy is rather created in an evolutionary manner, and in a manner that provides opportunities for reflection, adjustment, incorporation of unforeseen insights, etc. Therefore, although this document provides the basis for an ITTO KM Strategy that is firmly rooted in existing institutional priorities, roles and capacities, and is informed by prevailing wisdom in the broader community, it also follows a phased approach, setting the stage for each phase to build upon the previous phase(s), culminating in a mature ITTO KM Strategy for the 2015-2018 period of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan.

Within this iterative approach, the main recommended activities focus on the three strategic pillars:

Strategic Pillar 1: Enhancing knowledge sharing and dissemination. The ITTO website is by far the most significant vehicle for sharing ITTO knowledge and learning and it receives the most attention, followed by the creation of a wide range of ITTO knowledge outputs.

Strategic Pillar 2: Leveraging knowledge through partnerships. This is currently the most under-exploited area of ITTO influence, as ITTO's engagement in a variety of international partnerships, as well as with many partners in different regions, provides the foundation upon which a significantly stronger knowledge brokering role can be played by ITTO, especially through facilitation, support and capacity building for networks and communities of practice.

Strategic Pillar 3: Enabling knowledge use. This pillar is aimed at building appropriate knowledge capacities and institutional structures to fully realize ITTO's potential. The fulfillment of pillars 1 and 2 depend upon having capacities within ITTO that are partly already in existence, and are partly in need of development. Pillar 3 exists to ensure such capacities are ready to be deployed as needed.

Taken together, the recommended activities over three phases of ITTO KM Strategy development will progressively anchor the KM Strategy in the practices, people and institutions that make up the ITTO, and will continue to benefit from a built-in flexibility and responsiveness to deal with the changing environment within which ITTO is situated.

Background

The International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO) is an intergovernmental organization with headquarters in Yokohama, Japan. ITTO was established by the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA) 1983 and became operational in 1987. Subsequent agreements (ITTA 1994 and the current agreement, ITTA 2006) renewed ITTO's objectives to promote the expansion and diversification of international trade from sustainably managed and legally harvested tropical forests, and to promote the sustainable management of tropical timber producing forests (ITTA 2006, Art. 1).

ITTO operates within a large, complex set of international, national and local organizations that have a variety of objectives related to forests and trade, many of which are compatible with ITTO's objectives. Its core functions include providing an effective framework for consultation, international cooperation and policy development as to the world tropical timber economy, developing policies, guidelines and tools for sustainable forest management (SFM) and related trade.

To this end, ITTO collects, analyzes and disseminates information on all aspects of the world tropical timber economy and the sustainable management of tropical forests. Through these and other activities related to project implementation and multi-stakeholder dialogues, ITTO generates and disseminates knowledge and assists member countries to build capacity to put it to use. Consequently, Knowledge Management (KM) becomes an essential element of success in implementing SFM and in assisting members to develop efficient, competitive and sustainable industries to compete in international markets.

ITTO deals with a diversity of knowledge and the most critical knowledge is related to field practice through projects and thematic programmes. This knowledge is embedded in project teams and project partners who work in areas of forest management and conservation of tropical forests and sustainable trade of forest products. ITTO's approach is to use partnerships and networks at the international, regional, and national levels to advance its objectives. Thus, KM is an overarching priority that will be reflected in efforts to accomplish all of the priorities of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan (SAP) 2013-2018.

KM-related issues started to be discussed indirectly within the framework of the ITTA 2006. Since then the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC) has delivered several Decisions towards establishing / implementing KM within ITTO.

In 2008, Decision 9(XLIV) on Terms of Reference for Thematic Programme Advisory Committees (TPACs) decided that in selecting activities/pre-projects/projects for financing, all TPACs should consider mechanisms for KM and applicability of results to other countries, regionally or globally, among other criteria.

Decision 10(XLIV) on Thematic Programme Profiles decided to include KM within the "Programme Strategy" of the Thematic Programme on Community Forest Management and Enterprises, specifically at the regional and international levels, whose activities would include, support to KM and the sharing of country experiences, and partnership-building with interested national, regional and international bodies. To avoid duplication, the Programme would rely heavily on existing knowledge and accumulated experience.

Subsequently, in 2010, the Secretariat completed the development of the web-based Online Monitoring System (OLMS) to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of project monitoring, evaluation and overall project management. The use of the OLMS has become mandatory for all (pre) projects.

Annex 2 of the Progress Report on the Implementation of the ITTO Thematic Programme established the Monitoring Protocols (MPs) of operational TPs, which comprised the component KM in several thematic programmes, under the ITTO Thematic Programme on Forest Law Enforcement, Governance and Trade (TFLET), Community Forest Management and Enterprises (CFME), and Reducing Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhancing Environmental Services (REDDES). In these programmes the needs to incorporate KM systems and information sharing mechanisms are stressed, strengthening KM at all levels.

Based on these developments the ITTO Secretariat launched the KM development initiative in December 2010 with the goal of ensuring that ITTO knowledge, information and data are identified, captured, and shared in their entirety and developed as a strategic asset in a coherent and comprehensive manner. Following this, major resolutions have been largely taken up at the 48th ITTC Session through a series of decisions.

In 2011, Decision 2(XLVII) on the *ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2012-2013*, adopted this Biennial Work Programme and requested the Executive Director to implement and/or facilitate the

implementation of activities in the approved 2012-2013 Biennial Work Programme, as contained in the Annex. Activity 43 of the referred annex on the project to “Promote the Implementation of Guidelines for the Management of Secondary Tropical Forests, the Restoration of Degraded Tropical Forests and the Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Land” calls for the establishment and consolidation of a Community of Practice for KM and information dissemination.

The Meta-Evaluation of Previously Evaluated Projects, carried out in 2011 to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the ITTO monitoring and evaluation function to enhance countries’ efforts on the design and implementation of projects, made specific recommendations covering Knowledge Management issues. The recommendations deal with reports on completed projects, that should include more details on lessons learned, the need to consider lessons learned as an input into formulation of new projects, and also on the provision of adequate resources for the implementation of improved dissemination of lessons learned.

In 2012, Decision 4(XLVIII) on “Strengthening ITTO Thematic Programmes”, decided to request the Executive Director to raise awareness on lessons learned and best practices from the implementation of Thematic Programme projects, pre-projects and activities as part of ITTO’s KM strategy. Annex 2 of the Decision on Thematic Programme Documents (TPD), further develops the Thematic Programme Profile (TPP) and provides detailed information on planning and operational elements. The planning elements comprise strategies for achieving objectives, including through KM.

Decision 2(XLVIII) on the “ITTO Biennial Work Programme for the Years 2013-2014” decided to adopt this ITTO Biennial Work Programme. The ITTO strategic priority 5 of this Biennial Work Programme covers KM activities. Within Strategic Priority 5 - Improve the Quality and Availability of Information on Tropical Forests, Timber Markets and Trade - an activity was created to develop an ITTO KM strategy and KM guidelines.

The ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018, adopted at the 48th Session of ITTC, also mentions KM among strategic priorities and activities for 2013-2018, specifically in Strategic Priority 2 on “Increase the Contribution of Tropical Forests to National and Local Economies through International Trade”. It says that in general forest-based communities and community enterprises, and small and medium-sized enterprises (CFME), face particular challenges in gaining access to information and in meeting requirements in international markets, and need guidance and tools to enable them to succeed. Included among relevant CFME activities are strengthening of community-level capacity in SFM, strengthening of country capacity and enabling conditions in the development of CFME and KM.

This document is the first comprehensive ITTO work on KM. The main purpose is to support the development of an integrated approach to KM, which contributes to using lessons learned and building modular learning approaches, to further strengthening and improving the effectiveness of future project work, and to engage in and support policy and other dialogue processes.

The strategy will show how ITTO can be more agile in devising appropriate innovations and improving its systems and its institutional readiness, for continuous learning and sharing. The aim is to develop a KM Strategy that makes knowledge a key deliverable of ITTO's action for improving its effectiveness in achieving its mission.

Current ITTO Knowledge Management Context

What is Knowledge Management?

Before examining KM in the ITTO context in more detail, it is worth providing some conceptual clarification. There are numerous possible definitions of the term Knowledge Management. From the point of view of this strategy, **knowledge** is understood to reside mostly in the minds of people and in their individual and collective practices (in institutions, networks, communities). Knowledge can only be observed in its application (i.e. in physical or mental activity) and it can only be shared through action (e.g. collaborative work, learning on the job, training, etc.).

In other words, knowledge is dynamic. Most of what is captured in documents, databases, etc. is (static) **information** or data, rather than knowledge, though lessons, approaches, methods and tools can be

described in such outputs, and can assist in the sharing of knowledge beyond those who originally created it.²

Based on this perspective, **Knowledge Management** is the organisation of relevant information, knowledge and knowledge processes to fulfill core institutional goals. It is important to understand that KM as an institutional pursuit is not the creation or sharing of knowledge itself. It is rather the management of a conducive environment for such creation and sharing to occur. The latter is done by individuals and groups in the course of their work.³

ITTO Knowledge Management

Knowledge Management within ITTO is orchestrated by the ITTO Secretariat, based in Yokohama, Japan. The Secretariat has the primary responsibility for knowledge and information management in support of ITTO's mission. This responsibility includes working in ITTO's three official languages, English French and Spanish. Selected outputs are also produced in Japanese including the website.

This responsibility is carried out mainly in four ways:

- 1) Managing production of documentation (in terms of both inputs and outputs), implementation of decisions and reporting related to **proceedings of the ITTC**;
- 2) Managing processes related to **contracting, monitoring, evaluation and reporting on projects** supported through the regular ITTO project cycle and the more recent Thematic Programmes (as well as fellowships awarded to individuals for tropical timber-related research activities);
- 3) Producing outputs on a regular basis related to tropical timber and sustainable forest management, including the **Tropical Forest Update** magazine, the biweekly **Market Information Service**, and the statistical database, **Annual Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation**⁴.
- 4) Undertaking various additional activities identified in the **Biennial Work Programme**, many of which have KM-related elements (see [KM elements of activities in the BWP 2013-2014](#) for more detail).

The ITTO Secretariat has a coordinating role in terms of activity streams 1, 2 and 3, all of which also involve a number of other actors, particularly ITTO members and implementing partners. In the case of ITTC-related work, this includes the Council itself, its various committees, Trade and Civil Society Advisory Groups, Consumer and Producer Spokespersons, the Expert Panel (which appraises proposals under the regular project cycle), Thematic Programme Advisory Committees (which appraise projects under the Thematic Programmes) and the Fellowship Selection Panel. In the case of projects supported by ITTO, this includes a variety of project implementers, as well as country representatives in the various countries where ITTO-supported projects are implemented and Fellows selected from ITTO member countries.

Thus, although ITTO has not had an explicit KM Strategy up to now, a great deal of its day-to-day work can be considered knowledge management. This can be subdivided into processes related to ongoing work and technical infrastructure to support that work. The latter is briefly described below, followed by a consideration of key elements of the former.

² Thus, knowledge can be shared through documentation and reading of such documentation, but this mode of knowledge sharing is weak compared to the others mentioned above.

³ A key difference between knowledge and information can be understood through the example of riding a bicycle. You can find a lot of documentation on bicycle riding, but you will not learn **how** to ride a bicycle through reading alone. Such knowledge can only come through instruction and/or practice. The knowledge associated with bicycle riding cannot be fully captured in documents or other information outputs, but is embedded in the **practice** of bicycle riding itself. We cannot fully articulate this knowledge in a verbal or written form: it manifests itself through practiced movements which we (eventually) direct unconsciously. For more on the distinction between information and knowledge, see: [Fullan, R. \(2010\), 'Reflecting on the nature of information knowledge and learning', Helvetas.](#)

⁴ For a comprehensive overview of ITTO publications, see ITTO Publications List, submitted to the 48th session of the ITTC, and downloadable here: http://www.itto.int/council_documents/

Main KM-related infrastructure

In order to undertake its work, the ITTO Secretariat has put a number of IT tools and platforms in place to support its core operations. The main IT infrastructure in place to support ITTO's knowledge and information management is included in the following table. Different tools were created at different times and for different purposes, so overall the level of interconnectedness (and technical compatibility) is limited or non-existent.

ITTO's Main KM-related infrastructure

Infrastructure	Main Purposes
ITTO website: www.itto.int	To inform the public, act as repository for information and documentation about ITTC deliberations and ITTO activities
Project Database	For internal project monitoring (contains metadata on projects, including reporting and disbursements)
Online Management System (OLMS)	To support project monitoring, reporting and communication between project managers and counterparts in implementing organizations
Fileserver	For storage and retrieval of a wide variety of files used by all divisions, including working files, archived and draft reports and files related to approvals and financial transactions
Fellowship Database	For internal assessment of incoming Fellowship applications and monitoring of approved fellows' activities.
Photo Database	For storage and use of photographs from ITTO events and field visits.

ITTO Website (Publicly accessible)

The ITTO website constitutes the public face of both ITTO and the ITTC. The website is hosted by a service provider based in Tokyo. In its current form, the following pros and cons can be identified:

Pros

- One-stop shop for information about the ITTA, ITTC and ITTO;
- Source for ITTC decisions and reports, back to the first ITTC meeting in 1985;
- Source of information on recently approved or implemented projects;
- Primary platform for a range of ITTO publications including, besides the Tropical Forest Update, Market Information Service, and Annual Review and Assessment of the World Timber Situation, its series of **Technical Reports** and a variety of other publications;
- Definitive source for ITTO **Manuals and Guidelines**, around both proposing, implementing, monitoring and evaluating ITTO projects, and various standards and practices related to forest management;
- It is recognized by stakeholders as the main vehicle for ITTO information and knowledge sharing.

Cons

- Documents and other information are presented within a somewhat **complicated website architecture**;
- Relatively **little project-related information** in comparison to amount of information that could be presented (e.g. there are proposals from recent submission and approvals, and metadata extracted on projects since 2001 from the Project Database, but project outputs are limited, especially from

thematic programmes. Note: the Secretariat is currently developing a public interface to project information that will be saved and hosted on the public website [including project documents, completion reports, technical reports, publicity material and ex-post evaluation reports]. This development should inform and be linked to overall redevelopment of the ITTO website [see [Activity 1, Phase 1](#) of the proposed Action Plan];

- Most information is presented in a static way (e.g. most documentation is presented in a chronological order that cannot be filtered or sorted and must therefore be browsed, some is not indexed at all, such as earlier ITTC decisions and reports, which are uploaded as scans rather than PDFs). On the other hand, the website does have a Google-driven search engine, but the variety of types and sources of information available on the ITTO website limit the effectiveness of search results. The search engine is also not customizable (e.g. by adding filters for specific types of information objects, or restricting searches within currently viewed sections of the website).
- It is difficult to identify and readily link to other websites related to and maintained by ITTO's work

ITTO Project Database

(Accessible to Secretariat staff and members [read-only access for the latter upon request])

This database is used as a key monitoring tool, and was created to support workflow around project transactions (i.e. reporting, approval and disbursement). The project database is hosted by the same web service provider that hosts the public website. A summary assessment of the project database indicates the following pros and cons:

Pros

- Provides useful basic information (including a project summary) on ITTO-funded projects;
- Helps to manage workflow around monitoring and disbursement related to projects;
- Is the source for project metadata uploaded to the ITTO website.

Cons

- Is a separate platform to the OLMS, which is used for ongoing monitoring and communication with implementing partners;
- Does not actually manage workflow⁵, as the recording of reports and disbursements is done manually by administrative staff, and approval and disbursement processes are paper-based.
- It is not linked to the OLMS, so a duplication of effort in maintaining project data is required to keep both resources updated.
- It is not linked to the ITTO financial system

Online Management System (OLMS)

(Accessible to Secretariat staff, Executing Agencies and members [read-only access for non-Secretariat upon request])

The OLMS was developed to support ongoing monitoring and reporting on ITTO-funded projects. It was developed and managed by a third party service provider based in Brazil and is hosted in the United States. The main advantages and disadvantages of the OLMS are:

Pros

- Provides an avenue for ongoing communication between project managers and implementers;
- Sends automatic email alerts when reports have been submitted, further information is required, etc.;
- Includes project documents (e.g. approved proposals, inception reports and progress reports).
- Makes documentation related to project management available globally through the internet.

Cons

- Is relatively recent (since 2010) and therefore does not contain information on earlier projects;
- Is not yet used for all projects (some projects continue to be managed through paper-based workflow alone, supplemented by use of the fileserver for project documents), though this will

⁵ Note: The project database was not in fact designed to fully manage workflow, but this limits its effectiveness as it requires an 'external' process to do so. The OLMS is more of a workflow management platform, but the envisioned approval-related aspects of project cycle management were never integrated into the OLMS.

hopefully change as staff become more systematic in its use and executing agencies become more able to do so (due to greater familiarity with its operation as well as better internet access);

- It is not linked to the project database, so a duplication of effort in maintaining project data is required to keep both resources updated.
- It is not linked to the ITTO financial system
- Electronic approvals are made at the level of Project Manager only, while the subsequent approval process still requires printed documents (although the system was developed to cover the complete approval cycle)

Fileserver

(Accessible to Secretariat staff through office network and VPN)

The fileserver includes a wide variety of documents, including drafts, projects documents, documents related to financial transactions, and other files staff obtain and use for their individual purposes. A comprehensive assessment of the fileserver is beyond the scope of this exercise, but a brief summary of pros and cons includes:

Pros

- Is accessible by all staff working in the Secretariat offices, and can be accessed by VPN remotely;
- Provides flexibility around information management needs of all staff.

Cons

- There is no top-level standard on the fileserver among or within Divisions in terms of folder structures;
- The searchability of documents on the fileserver is limited (no full-text searching);
- There is no linkage with the public website or project databases, therefore a continuing need for document management to be done manually.

Fellowship Database

(Accessible to Secretariat staff)

The Fellowship Database is used as a monitoring tool of ITTO fellows' activities as well as a fellowship application evaluation tool. The database contains the profiles and application documents of fellowship applicants including the assessment data, the profiles and activities of fellowship recipients and their various reports, including the Fellowship final report, manuals, monographs, Ph.D. and MS thesis, and fellows' photos.

Pros

- Provides useful basic information on ITTO fellows and their activities
- Helps to manage workflow around monitoring and disbursement related to fellows
- Includes fellowship final reports, publications, PhD and MS theses and fellows' photos

Cons

- It is not a web-based database, and is not accessible from outside the Secretariat office
- It is not linked to the project database, and therefore fellowship reports, such as manuals, monographs, Ph.D. and MS theses, are not searchable when one is searching relevant documents on a particular subject.

Photo Database

(Accessible to Secretariat staff, using the Picasa internet platform)

The Photo Database contains photographs from ITTO events and missions taken by Secretariat staff, or staff members of Executing Agencies, project staff or consultants. Secretariat staff can use photographs from this database for reports and various publications.

Pros

- Contains photo albums related to different ITTO events and missions

- Is accessible globally through the Picasa platform

Cons

- The number of photos that is tagged with relevant keywords to aid retrieval is unknown, so users may need to browse through a number of different albums to find suitable photos
- As there is no formal filtering procedure, and the quality of photos in the albums varies significantly, which may increase time necessary to find suitable photos for use

KM-related activities and processes

The most significant processes in place are those that manage workflow around ITTC deliberations, ITTO publications, and transactions related to ITTO-supported projects and activities. In addition, there are KM elements to many of the specific activities pursued in the Biennial Work Programme (BWP). These are briefly outlined below.

ITTC KM processes

In this context, the ITTO Secretariat prepares the agenda for the annual ITTC meeting and produces (or compiles, as appropriate) the range of inputs required for each agenda item. Aside from the standard elements of each meeting (e.g. opening, ascertainment of quorum, etc.), the bulk of ITTC meeting time is taken up with decisions/approval of pre-projects, projects, policy discussions, administrative and strategic matters and the biennial workplan. The Secretariat accordingly produces minutes and decisions from each ITTC meeting and, upon approval, posts those outputs to the ITTO website.

Between meetings, the ITTO Secretariat, among other things, monitors project and pre-project implementation, facilitates and supports the implementation of activities defined by the Council, publishes and disseminates information on work implemented by the organization, organizes and facilitates the annual face-to-face meeting of the Expert Panel (which makes recommendations for consideration at ITTC meetings on project proposals submitted under the regular project cycle), and facilitates the recommendation process around project proposals submitted under the Thematic Programmes, which are provided to the ITTC by the Secretariat (after review and rating by the Thematic Programme Advisory Committees [TPACs] and selection by the Executive Director in consultation with TPACs and ITTO members). Note: unlike the Expert Panel, the TPACs do not normally meet as a group, either face-to-face or online.

ITTO Publications

Different ITTO publications are handled by different Divisions within the ITTO Secretariat. For example, the Market Information Service and the Annual Timber Review are produced by the Division of Trade and Industry. The Tropical Forest Update has been produced under an Editor/Communication Manager; following the restructuring of the Secretariat it will be part of the responsibility of the Communications and Outreach Officer in cooperation with the technical divisions. Technical reports are in principle produced by the implementing agencies, in coordination with division most responsible for the area of focus of individual project reports.

There are also publications produced from the implementation of activities based on Council decisions, including technical reports on specific issues, manuals, policy documents and others.

Finally, the ITTO Secretariat staff is currently discussing options for the publication of an e-newsletter for members, which could help to highlight particularly interesting developments, events and emerging project results.

Project-related KM processes and activities

In terms of projects, the main KM-related processes are: workflow and associated decisions around monitoring, approval and disbursement; periodic assessment missions conducted by project managers, publication of results, recommendations and assessment of lessons learned from ex- post evaluation.

Project-related monitoring, approval and disbursement relies on three separate sub-processes, which are: monitoring and communication with project implementers via the OLMS; metadata collected and maintained in the project database, and; paper-based approval of project reports and disbursements from Project Managers, through Assistant Directors and the Executive Director to the Division of Operations for completion of transactions.

In addition to the 'transactional' element of project monitoring, Project Managers conduct assessment missions, on average once per year per project (usually several project monitoring missions are combined in one trip for purposes of efficiency). These missions provide hands-on validation of correspondence and reporting via the OLMS. They also provide opportunities for deeper sharing of learning and knowledge about project activities.

Finally, project results make their way into publication through various channels, including: the project reports themselves which are posted on the ITTO website (but are currently not systematically distributed or published otherwise), the Tropical Forest Update and Technical Reports.

KM elements of activities in the BWP 2013-2014

As already mentioned, many activities outlined in the BWP include KM-related elements, additional examples of which include:

- ***Convening and facilitating events*** (e.g. Activity 3 – CBFP Partners' meeting, Activity 5 – Engineered Wood Conference, Activity 12 – International Forum on Environmental Services)
- ***Capacity building of members and partners*** (e.g. Activity 2 – Demonstration & adoption of credit schemes for SMFEs, Activity 8 – Capacity building around CITES listings of timber species, Activity 10(a) – SFM Criteria & Indicators workshops, Activity 31 – Training on efficient wood processing technologies, Activity 32 – Facilitating technology & KS around sustainable forest industry through knowledge hub training, Activity 34 – Enhancing capacity of member countries around statistic collection and reporting, Activity 35 (c), Regional capacity building workshops on SFM principles and guidelines)
- ***Participation in and support of networking/collaboration*** (e.g. Activity 5 – Promoting non-timber forest products for SFM, Activity 11 (bullets 3-4) – Climate change and tropical forests learning event and discussion forum, Activity 14(a) – Forest landscape restoration network in collaboration with GPFLR, Activity 28 – Cooperation with CPF and UNFF)

These kinds of activities contribute to the generation, sharing and use of knowledge within ITTO and beyond. Although they form part of an integrated work programme, such activities can be strengthened and further leveraged by being planned and implemented within an overarching KM strategy. For example, the KM strategy should help to:

- Identify the most strategic partners and events for ITTO from a KM perspective
- Strengthen the knowledge sharing and learning elements of ITTO activities (e.g. by promoting participatory approaches to facilitation, targeted energy devoted to network development and support, creation of knowledge outputs, etc.)
- Highlight opportunities for cross-fertilization between knowledge sharing and learning activities within the BWP, and website and other communications activities (e.g. through reporting and support for online interaction around events, publications and network activity)

These implications are explored further in the Action Plan.

Challenges and Knowledge Needs

The above analysis of the current ITTO KM context suggests that there is a relatively strong emphasis on the transactional work of ITTO (around deliberations and decisions of the ITTC, approval, financing, monitoring,

implementation and evaluation of projects and fellowships), and on management and distribution of the information that is generated as a result of ITTO projects and activities (including communications-focused activities). The suggestion is not to discontinue these things, but to refine them and to redirect some of the energy of the Secretariat, of members and of partners towards more dynamic and interactive knowledge- and learning-oriented paths.

Thus, the main challenges that can be identified from current ITTO practice are:

- 1) The **management of information and workflow** related to the projects and activities it monitors and reports on;
- 2) The effective **capitalization of experience and learning** that occurs in the implementation of ITTO projects/activities;
- 3) Making the large variety of ITTO **information outputs readily accessible** online;
- 4) The need to develop **a strategic approach to KM**.

Confronting the above challenges would go a long way toward strengthening what the ITTO already does and allowing others around the world with an interest in tropical timber and SFM to derive greater benefits from ITTO's activities.

Management of information and workflow

This challenge can be subdivided into two parts:

- 1) The lack of integration of technical platforms for the management of project/activity and other information outputs;
- 2) The reliance on paper-based workflow for various decisions and transactions throughout the project cycle.

The ITTO Secretariat is currently exploring a partial solution to these challenges through the introduction of an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) platform that will in the first phase replace the existing paper-based system with an electronic one for project/activity disbursements. This platform is scheduled to be operational by the end of 2013.

The ERP will not handle the project information and interaction currently provided by the OLMS, although the potential exists for it to eventually do some or all of this.

The continued development of the ERP depends upon results of the first phase as well as discussions around further workflow/information/knowledge requirements. For this reason, implementation of the ERP should be linked with that of the KM Strategy: the two are not only complementary, but as they develop will have increasingly overlapping areas of interest. It is crucial that they are managed in such a way that they support rather than compete with each other.

Capitalization of experience and learning

Over the past several years, through the encouragement of ITTC and the results of the Meta Evaluation exercise conducted in 2011, the ITTO has placed increased emphasis on including lessons learned in project/activity reporting and in thematic publications.

This has helped to focus attention on some of the more interesting results that are generated on an ongoing basis. Increasingly, project proposals, and reporting explicitly consider the learning element, but the impact is likely to be small because there is limited further action around such learning: providing reflections from project implementers and managers on what has been learned is a necessary beginning, but more explicit and ongoing follow up is necessary.

ITTO's network of implementing partners, countries, international institutions and networks could be put to greater use in supporting increased knowledge sharing and learning in the tropical timber sector. See the KM Strategy chapter for more on this.

Making information outputs readily available

The ITTO Secretariat already manages a large amount of knowledge and information of various kinds, and makes much of it available on the ITTO website, but the various practices by which the content gets to the website, and the ways in which it can be accessed make finding and retrieving such content significantly more difficult than it needs to be (As mentioned above, the introduction of the new public interface to project information will improve the availability of this kind of information).

The extent to which the ITTO website needs a major redesign or adoption of a new platform remains to be seen, but in addition to the desire to make the information it contains more accessible, the re-conceptualization of the website should take into account possibilities to engage members, implementers and others, not just as information consumers, but as information producers and participants in reflection and dialogue.

The days when an organizational website was a provider of documents and static web pages alone are long gone. As the ITTO website is already the main public window on projects and activities supported by ITTO, and on the deliberations of the ITTC, it makes sense to put some energy into maximizing its potential for greater engagement of the range of stakeholders of interest to ITTO. This point is taken up further in the Action Plan.

Developing a strategic approach to KM

It is increasingly recognized in development circles not only that Knowledge Management is a critical factor in the effectiveness of institutions and networks, but that KM is also not just about technology. KM is as much or more about people and their interactions as it is about managing information. The ITTO has historically put most of its energy into the latter, with much less going into the former.

A review of a variety of KM strategy and similar documents from different institutions⁶ confirms the need to shift focus towards people and processes together rather than as independent factors. A sample of relevant statements includes:

- Knowledge sharing is about connecting people with the knowledge they need – rather than collecting and compiling documents (ILO, 2007:2)
- While appropriate hardware is essential, the key to successful knowledge management is found in the culture and mindsets of an organization (IFAD 2007:6)
- Knowledge is a social process and the focus must shift from the “knowledge bank” approach, in which technology supports one-way dissemination, to a more interactive approach in which technology supports collaboration (FAO 2011:3).

How these ideas can be translated into action will be explored in the ITTO KM Strategy Chapter. A key implication of these statements is that the ITTO Secretariat – and to a lesser extent, the ITTC and country member representatives – must be involved in a continuing process of defining, shaping and implementing the ITTO KM Strategy.

This is not simply a question of efficiency: the relevance and eventual success of the KM strategy will be directly related to the individual level of ownership its main implementers have. Such ownership can only be meaningfully achieved by direct engagement in the creation and steering of the strategy itself.

⁶ KM strategy documents reviewed in preparation for the ITTO KM Strategy include those from: ADB, FAO, GEF, IFAD, ILO, PAHO and WHO.

ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy

Relation to ITTO's Mission and Priorities

The ITTO KM strategy must be directly linked to ITTO's mission and priorities for it to contribute meaningfully to their fulfillment. The ITTO's challenging task is to foster a trade in tropical timber and other tropical forest goods and/or services that simultaneously contributes to sustainable development in tropical countries and conserves the tropical forest resources on which such trade is based (ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018).

ITTO's Mission is:

To facilitate discussion, consultation and international cooperation on issues relating to the international trade and utilization of tropical timber and the sustainable management of its resource base [emphasis added].

The mission of ITTO as a catalyst for progress over tropical timber trade, utilization and sustainable use suggests a strong knowledge brokering and learning role. This role is partly fulfilled by ITTO's current project/activity work and the processing and production of outputs related to that work. However, there is significant scope for ITTO to strengthen its levels of engagement in facilitating knowledge and learning processes that would not only increase the impact of the work it supports, but would also contribute to building on that work, especially at the field level where much of the current learning takes place.

In addition to the ITTO's mission, the Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 outlines the following Strategic Priorities:

- i. **Strategic Priority 1** – Promote Good Governance and Enabling Policy Frameworks for Strengthening SFM and Related Trade, and Enhancing SFM Financing and Investment
- ii. **Strategic Priority 2** – Increase the Contribution of Tropical Forests to National and Local Economies, Including through International Trade
- iii. **Strategic Priority 3** – Enhance the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Producing Forests
- iv. **Strategic Priority 4** – Reduce Tropical Deforestation and Forest Degradation and Enhance the Provision of Environmental Services
- v. **Strategic Priority 5** – Improve the Quality and Availability of Information on Tropical Forests, Forest Product Markets and Trade
- vi. **Strategic Priority 6** – Build and Develop Human Resource Capacity to Implement

These priorities should be used as a guide to prioritize activities geared towards strengthening knowledge management relating to ITTO's programme of work (as outlined in its Biennial Work Programme).

Knowledge Management Strategy Objectives

Planning and implementation of the ITTO KM Strategy must be:

- 1) firmly rooted in ITTO's core competencies;
- 2) embedded in its work processes;
- 3) closely linked to its priority areas of work, and;
- 4) institution-wide, going beyond the ITTO Secretariat.

Taking the ITTO's objectives that affect concerns and interests of tropical timber producer and consumer countries into account, the ITTO Knowledge Management Strategy makes knowledge a key deliverable of ITTO's action for improving its effectiveness in achieving its mission.

Following from this, the overall goal of the ITTO KM Strategy is:

To fully harness the knowledge and innovation being generated in ITTO projects and programmes as well as from ITTO member countries and partners to contribute most effectively to trade, utilization and sustainable management of tropical forests

The objective of the ITTO KM Strategy is:

To facilitate production, sharing and use of critical knowledge through outreach, support for networking and capitalization of experience, and capacity building

Achievement of the overall goal and objective is supported by three Strategic Pillars:

- 1) Enhancing knowledge sharing and dissemination;
- 2) Leveraging knowledge through partnerships, and;
- 3) Enabling knowledge use

The ITTO KM Strategy goal, objective and strategic pillars are summarized in the following diagram:

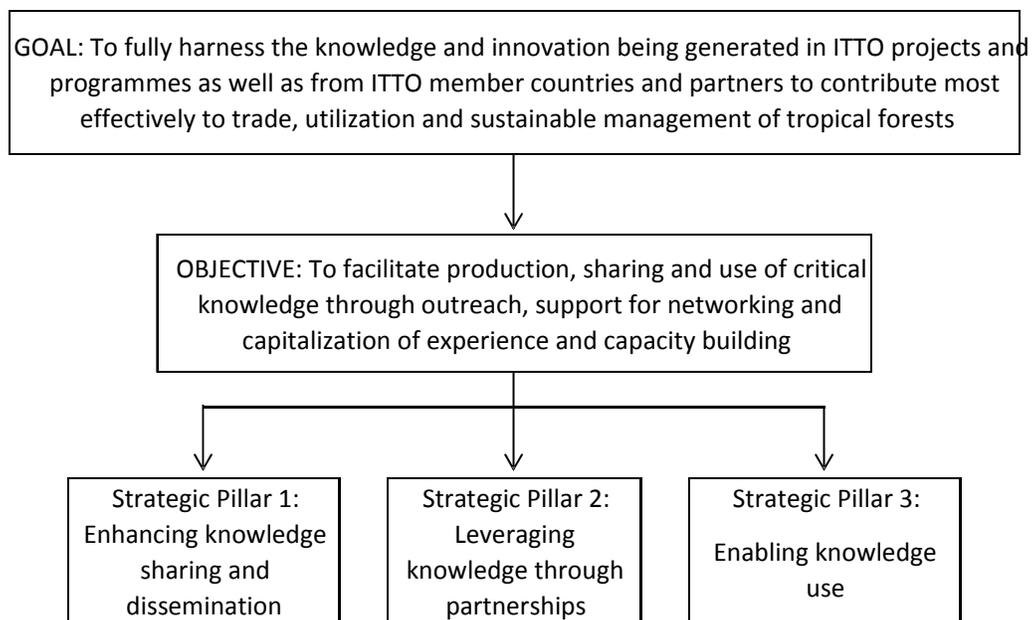


Figure 1. ITTO KM Strategy Goal, Objective and Strategic Pillars

ITTO KM Strategy Implementation Framework

The bulk of ITTO knowledge is embedded in project teams and project partners who work in areas of forest management and conservation, forest industry, timber and non-timber forest product (NTFP) trade, and on issues linked to community development, biodiversity conservation, poverty alleviation, small and medium size enterprise (SME) development, and others.

In order to effectively and efficiently provide the guidance and direction necessary to enhance learning and knowledge management in support of its mission and priorities, the ITTO KM Strategy should be implemented in an iterative way, taking a phased-approach that allows for engagement of key stakeholders, reflection and adjustment as the various elements of the strategy are put into place and evolve.

This approach allows for a series of immediate activities that do not require a large amount of resources to be implemented, which can collectively serve to build a strong foundation for a robust strategy. This approach will also help to ensure that the strategy reflects the needs of those who are meant to both benefit from and contribute to its implementation.

The ITTO KM Strategy Action Plan outlines recommended steps in three phases, which are more precisely specified in the short term and less so in the medium and long term. This is due to the fact that phase 2 and 3 activities depend to a certain extent on the unfolding of phase 1 activities, and that activities in phases 2 and 3 will need to be more closely specified in collaborative planning processes undertaken by the ITTO Secretariat with the guidance of the ITTC.

As an initial response to ITTC's directive to the ITTO Secretariat to develop a KM Strategy and guidelines, the Secretariat created an informal KM Group to discuss KM in general, as well as how KM concepts might be fruitfully applied in the ITTO context.

It is recommended that the Secretariat builds on this group by including representatives of each division and appointing a chair, so that it can act as a Steering Group for the pursuit of the Action Plan outlined below. This will ensure that each division's perspective is well-represented, that opportunities to engage various stakeholders are taken up, and that the Action Plan is pursued in a timely manner.

ITTO KM Strategy Action Plan

Overview

The ITTO KM Strategy Action Plan is designed to create the conditions for ITTO to fulfill its KM goals in an evolutionary manner.

Phase 1 covers a 4-month period, which should be rapidly deployed and will provide immediate benefits. Phase 2 begins to confront longer-term KM challenges, and ones that require sustained effort over time and engagement of various partners in order to succeed. Phase 3 provides scope for reflection and assessment of the initial KM Strategy, as well as preparation and launching of a more mature third phase of the KM Strategy for the period 2015-2018 that can serve the KM purposes of ITTO throughout the remainder of the current SAP.

Phase 1: January – April 2014

Goal: To implement activities that:

- Can be readily undertaken without further planning or consultation;
- Focus mostly on achievables at the level of the Secretariat, thereby creating the conditions for broader impact as the KM Strategy gathers momentum; and/or
- Collectively build a foundation upon which phases 2 and 3 can be effectively tailored and based.

To this end, the following activities have been identified for this phase:

Re-examination of information infrastructure and related processes

Strategic Pillar 1 - Enhancing Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination
--

Although this activity is somewhat substantial, the idea is to use the phase 1 period to plan for effective roll-out in phase 2. Specific tasks associated with this component of phase one include:

- ***Creation of a requirements specification***⁷

This should which gives a clear indication of: key stakeholders (much of this has already been done in the context of the ITTO Communications Strategy and could be used for this purpose) and the core content the ITTO needs to provide to them; the paths by which this content travels to arrive at

⁷ This should be elaborated in close coordination with the renewal of ITTO's communications strategy. Although the communications strategy has a broader scope in terms of its relationship management aspect, ITTO's publication priorities and the development of the ITTO website are obviously of great significance in the context of its communications strategy.

the ITTO website, along with how such paths might be improved (e.g. project documents of various kinds from the OLMS, publications such as TFU, MIS, ATR, guidelines from the divisions, etc.); which relevant content related to ITTO interests (e.g. that produced by other institutions such as CBD, FAO) should also be accessible to ITTO stakeholders (through, for example, links, newsfeeds, etc.).

The desired functionality and architecture of the website to deliver core information in a user-friendly manner (here it is important to engage the services of a third party with web content management expertise to work with Secretariat staff on an initial design).

- **Identification of the main additional process-related barriers to improved/enhanced flow of content to the website**

This should include recommendations for the improvement/replacement of such processes, and should be informed by the ERP project, for example the replacement of paper-based approval processes with electronic ones wherever feasible.

- **Exploration of possibilities for online engagement of implementing and other partners, members and other interested parties in dialogues and information exchange around key topics of interest to ITTO**

This task is specifically directed to determining how a more interactive ITTO website could also support more dialogues and networking (possibly on a regional basis) among implementers as well as other partners with whom ITTO would like to maintain strong and ongoing relationships. It is partly a question of outlining the key potential participants in such interaction, and partly one of identifying where existing platforms already provide spaces for such interaction. Obviously, this task can only be a preliminary exploration, but what it could do is point to specific areas for further action in phase 2 (e.g. networking of ITTO project implementers on a regional basis, planned or ongoing collaborative activities within the BWP, etc.).

Such an exercise would provide a strong foundation not only for the evolution of the website itself, but for additional information and knowledge-related activities undertaken by the Secretariat, ITTO members and partners.

The importance of this activity to the KM Strategy is underlined by the fact that in a survey of key ITTO stakeholders in May-June 2013, almost 80% of respondents indicated the website as their primary source for ITTO-related content, so it is obviously a key plank in the fulfillment of ITTO's mission.

It is **strongly recommended** that a Secretariat staff person be designated as a focal point for website-related discussions and activities. This could be combined with a complementary responsibility for communications more generally, but the website-specific responsibilities (e.g. ensuring coherence of discussions and plans around website rehabilitation, liaison with service providers, etc.) should command a minimum 60% Full Time Equivalent (FTE).

Given the importance of the website to ITTO's reputation and relationships with members and partners, this is a relatively small allocation. It is not suggested that a new person be hired to fill such a position, merely that this formal allocation be made.

Estimated budget: USD40,000

Strengthening Secretariat knowledge-related capacities

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

There are two tasks associated with this activity which are:

- **Put a mechanism in place for maximizing the retaining of institutional memory, beginning with the Secretariat**

This is a high priority due to the fact that a relatively large number of Secretariat staff have either recently retired or are scheduled to retire within the next several years⁸. This can be done through targeted interviews and perhaps video summaries of key learnings over the years. Ideally, the retiring (or recently retired) person could spend 1-2 weeks working with his/her replacement to provide an on-the-job handover, but this may not be feasible in some cases.

Estimated budget USD20,000 (Covering phases 1 and 2. This should also be budgeted in Phase 3)

- **Take a proactive approach to capacity building of staff**

Aside from occasional trainings targeted at specific tools (e.g. the adoption and use of the OLMS), there has historically been no institutional policy on training, which represents a lost opportunity to ensure staff capacities evolve to cope with evolving requirements, especially in a context of high short-to-medium term turnover. If the ITTO Secretariat is going to increase its efforts in terms of outreach, facilitation and communications, then the need for staff capacity development (through, for example, training and possibly coaching on face-to-face and online facilitation over an initial period, training on the use of social networking tools, language training) will increase during the remainder of the current SAP period. Staff capacity building/training requirements should also be reviewed on an annual basis, perhaps in conjunction with a performance review process.

Estimated budget USD: 30,000 (Covering phases 1 and 2. This should also be budgeted in Phase 3)

Enhancement of the ITTO Secretariat working environment

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

There are two aspects to this activity, one of which relates to the promotion of interaction among staff in different divisions who would not otherwise share experience, learning, challenges, etc., and the other to the physical layout of offices (which on the surface may appear relatively unimportant or even trivial, but which can have significant effects on spontaneous interactions, knowledge sharing and identification of innovative ideas)⁹.

Specific tasks associated with this activity include:

- **Breaking down of divisional 'silos'**

There are few mechanisms for ongoing interaction, sharing and learning between divisions, and this limits opportunities for collaboration and awareness of what is happening in the different divisions. Recommended changes to the physical environment should help, but a more proactive approach to internal networking should also be taken up. This can be done quite simply, for example by holding regular brown bag lunches or other update mechanisms such as featured teams or divisions at all-staff meetings, opportunities for joint work (e.g. around the website, where co-creation of a website vision will anyway be essential). This task should become part of the ongoing work of the Secretariat, and should include mechanisms for participation by regional offices (e.g. by Skype/teleconference, email exchange, periodic updates).

There are no budget implications associated with this task.

- **Enhancement of the physical layout of ITTO offices**

The current layout runs counter to prevailing wisdom around supporting KM insofar as individuals are relatively isolated from each other, open spaces are few, and internal corridors are long and

⁸ For example, out of a staff contingent of roughly 28 persons in either the Yokohama office or regional offices, 4 persons with an average of over 20 years of service have retired since 2011. An additional four are set to retire in the 2013-2015 period, who together will represent an average of just under 20 years of service. This translates to a loss of approximately 160 years of ITTO experience over less than 5 years.

⁹ See, for example, <http://hbr.org/2011/09/high-performance-office-space>, and <http://myturnstone.com/blog/how-steve-jobs-encouraged-creativity-and-collaboration/> for reflections on how physical design of workspaces to encourage spontaneous and/or collective interaction can substantially improve overall productivity.

narrow. The office layout should be redesigned to not only accommodate but to encourage more interaction. In the process of such redesign, old equipment and other obsolete materials can be recycled or thrown away. Staff need to have working space that will allow them to concentrate on their respective tasks without undue disturbance, but they should also be encouraged to spontaneously interact with each other and to arrange ad hoc meetings among small subsets of staff. Such interaction could be enhanced by creation of open spaces around a coffee machine/water cooler, or placing of small tables and chairs in strategic locations for spontaneous meetings (perhaps with appropriately placed sound-absorbing materials). All of this is of course subject to existing constraints of the office environment (e.g. building codes, affordability).

Estimated budget: USD20,000

Exploration of streamlined institutional processes and structures.

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

There are two structural issues which should be examined (together) with a view to the potential for improving both links between ITTO committees, panels and the Secretariat, and the management of information and workflow related to these entities. As the committee and panel structure is largely mandated by the ITTA 2006 and decisions by the ITTC, a reorganization of any kind could not realistically take place in Phase 1 of the ITTO KM Strategy implementation.

However, the following adjustments should be explored in the first phase in order to allow sufficient time for preparation and submission of reorganization recommendations to the ITTC in the second phase, in the event such reorganization is deemed useful. The exploration could be undertaken jointly by designated Secretariat staff and a consultant with long experience of and/or familiarity with ITTO.

- ***Merging of TPACs and Expert Panel***

The current separation of the review processes of proposals under the regular project cycle and those under Thematic Programmes introduces an artificial disconnect between the two, as well as making the orientation toward thematic priorities (as outlined in ITTO's Strategic Priorities) difficult to follow. It is understood that funding mechanisms are different between regular project cycle projects and TP projects, which may make such a merger difficult, but it is equally difficult to promote and benefit from a programmatic approach with a continuing separation. A strengthening of ITTO's programmatic approach would make it easier to both plan ITTO projects and activities according to its Strategic Priorities and to pursue a KM strategy that is strongly anchored in those priorities.

A further constraint is that the Expert Panel has face-to-face meetings twice per year, whereas the TPACs rarely meet, either face-to-face or virtually. It is recommended that a merger be considered, so that all proposals can be vetted by either one group of experts or different groups that are constituted on a thematic basis, and the processes by which proposals go through approval and eventual funding is harmonized. At a minimum, if the TPACs continue to exist independently, they should have occasional face-to-face meetings to support their work. This should be added, if feasible, to the agenda of the November 2014 ITTC meeting.

Estimated budget: USD 10,000 (for relevant research and recommendations)

- ***Alignment of ITTC committees with the new Secretariat structure***

Similar to the disconnection between regular projects and Thematic Programme projects, although the Secretariat structure has changed in 2013, there is no corresponding change in the ITTC Committee structure, which creates a misalignment of working arrangements. It is recommended that the structures of ITTC committees and the Secretariat be examined and a harmonized structure be proposed. This should also be added, if possible, to the agenda of the November 2014 ITTC meeting.

Estimated budget: USD10'000 (for relevant research and recommendations)

It may be advisable to implement the above two pieces of research together.

Phase 2: May – December 2014

Goal: To consolidate early gains, reflect on planning and experience so far; implement main planks of phase 3.

To achieve this goal, the following activities have been identified for phase 2 implementation:

Redevelopment of ITTO website

Strategic Pillar 1 - Enhancing Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

A plan for website redevelopment should be created and implemented, based on the requirements specification developed in Phase 1 (Re-examination of information infrastructure and related processes).

The Phase 1 activity should provide a basis for an initial rapid planning period in Phase 2 (May-Jul 2014) followed by a 5-month period of implementation (including: modular platform development according to the different types of content and desired functionalities, review of functionalities and related processes, testing and 'go live' in January 2015).

A crucial element of the website redevelopment is the searchability of the content. A logical structure of the website is important, but equally and perhaps more important is the functionality of the search engine, and the related indexing of the content. Increasingly, website users will find content based on their searches, not on their knowledge of the website structure. Here an examination of search histories on the current website, coupled perhaps with some focus group discussions with representatives of key stakeholders could provide very valuable pointers.

In coordination with the website redevelopment, the insights gained in task 1, Activity 1 of the first phase around existing flows of content from point of origin to the website should inform changes in the processes used by the Secretariat to enable such flows. The latter changes should not require additional resources, unless they are associated with modifications of specific other platforms (e.g. ERP, OLMS, etc.)

Finally, and in line with prevailing wisdom on the use of websites for engagement of key stakeholders through interactive functionality (e.g. discussion forums, news and social networking feeds, blog posts, etc.), phase 2 should also consider the feasibility/future friendliness of the redesigned ITTO website for these kinds of additional functionalities. It would be overly ambitious to place major emphasis on such functionalities, as they require a corresponding increase in person-time to support and engage with stakeholders, but they should be built into the planning process in order for the future ITTO web presence to be able to support expanded interaction with key stakeholders and networks.

Estimated budget: USD100,000

Pursuing targeted learning opportunities

This should include:

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

- ***Increased emphasis on the learning element of project planning, monitoring and evaluation***
This task could take a number of forms. Areas of particular importance include: support for the creation of baseline information, covering project planning and early implementation.

Significant improvement on baselines alone would greatly improve the utility of evaluations; collective dialogue around the potential for better use of evaluation results, perhaps through regional networks; conducting more mid-term evaluations in order to make learning more accessible during implementation, and; exploration of processes for more systematic use of

evaluation results (e.g. by supporting interaction among producers countries around results, targeted publications that synthesize key results, etc.).

It is recommended that one or two pilot exercises be conducted the results of which could be incorporated in phase 3 of the KM Strategy (2015-2018).

Estimated budget: USD20,000.

Strategic Pillar 2 – Leveraging Knowledge through Partnerships

- **Identification of broader learning opportunities**

Here the desired functionality of the ITTO website versus existing third-party and/or partner solutions that could provide platforms for ongoing interaction should be considered. In other words, Secretariat staff, members and partners who might pursue some of the learning opportunities mentioned here should also be encouraged to discuss their evolving needs with those who are responsible for the redevelopment of the ITTO website.

Specific learning opportunities will need to be identified, but one possibility could be convening a meeting of partners around a key ITTO issue. A typical example would be Activity 3 under Strategic Priority (SP) 1 in the BWP 2013-2014: ITTO Meeting of Partners of the Congo Basin Forest Partnership. This activity is slated to take place before the KM Strategy can be approved, but it is these kinds of activity that provide leveraging opportunities. What would be involved would be to design the meeting with a view to maximizing appropriate learning and networking that would also hopefully continue beyond the meeting if appropriate (e.g. pre-meeting virtual communication, learning-oriented methodologies¹⁰ to be employed during the meeting, and facilitation of appropriate online follow-up).

Other examples with perhaps feasible timing are Activity 7 (SP2), the planned Engineered Wood Conference, Activity 10 (SP4), the convening of an expert meeting on criteria and indicators for SFM, and Activity 12 (SP4) International Forum on Environmental Services. Explore potential usefulness of network facilitation (either independently, for example with fellowship recipients, or in partnership with a key strategic partner). This task needs to be fleshed out by the Secretariat, based on the most promising networks/activities with which it is currently involved.

Another possibility is related to Activity 14 (SP4), to support the establishment of a network of learning sites for forest landscape restoration in collaboration with the Global Partnership on Forest Landscape Restoration (GPFLR). Others could develop out of the capacity development Activities 31 and 32 (SP5), which could facilitate networking among practitioners working in specific areas of work relating to wood processing, biomass energy, research, training of trainers, etc. Here there is potential to network key players, support ongoing interactions and strengthen knowledge hubs¹¹.

A further possibility – and one that holds great promise for leveraging knowledge generation supported by ITTO – would be to pilot an activity to strengthen shared learning and knowledge sharing on a relevant topic at a regional level among project/activity implementers. Here the Secretariat could convene an initial meeting aimed primarily at sharing tools, methods and learning from projects/activities, and explore the possibility of an ongoing less intense interaction – perhaps through the formation of a regional network – around key issues in the tropical timber sector. In all cases, such exploration should focus on laying the groundwork, and to pursuing further network support only in the face of expressed interest on the part of potential network members. The Secretariat role in this context would go beyond convening to include active process facilitation, with a view to potential sharing or handing over of such a role with/to partners.

¹⁰ There are many possibilities here ,but see for example, the Knowledge Sharing methods and tools described here: <http://www.kstoolkit.org>, as well as various tools and methods in the e-learning module '[Knowledge Sharing for Development](#)', (FAO IMARK Group, 2011).

¹¹ Of possible relevance in this context is the following article on the relevance of feedback loops to connect project implementers with those who are meant to benefit from those projects: <http://www.cgdev.org/publication/how-feedback-loops-can-improve-aid-and-may-be-governance>.

Finally, the exploration of a network of Fellowship programme alumni is a potential candidate for consideration, as a large number of individuals are supported through this programme, and the sector-related knowledge they collectively represent is substantial.

The above suggestions provide pointers to possible activities to strengthen learning that are linked to either ongoing project/activity monitoring, implementation and evaluation, to activities identified in the BWP, or opportunities to extend the reach (through support for networking) of ITTO. The intention is for the Secretariat to increase its knowledge brokering, facilitation and knowledge capacity development roles in ways which are adapted to a variety of contexts, and for members and others to support and participate in events, and ongoing interactions supported by the Secretariat. From the Secretariat side, this means in some cases (e.g. a regional knowledge initiative) that the African or Latin American regional offices should take the lead role in knowledge and learning activities. In other cases it would be the Yokohama office.

It is suggested that a small and manageable set of activities be identified and pursued in order to avoid overloading the Secretariat, requiring too many resources, or reducing the Secretariat's capacity to facilitate reflection on the experiences as they are being made, in order to both make sensible adjustments and feed into development of Phase 3 of the KM Strategy (2015-2018). Thus, activities should be prioritized according to their strategic potential (related to the BWP, level of involvement of members and/or key partners).

Cost implications of the above tasks are difficult to estimate, as they depend on such things as: the number and nature of activities undertaken, existing capacities within the Secretariat (and related need for training/coaching), etc. However, to the extent that such pilots can be conducted under existing activities of the BWP, and/or be partly funded by partners, the resource implications should be relatively low.

Recommended Budget allocation to support piloting: USD50,000 (Phase 2. This should also be budgeted – through targeted support within BWP activities, in Phase 3).

Validation and extension of the KM Strategy for the remainder of the Strategic Action Plan period (2015-2018)

Strategic Pillar 1 - Enhancing Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination
Strategic Pillar 2 – Leveraging Knowledge through Partnerships
Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

A crucial consideration in the solidification of the KM Strategy in the medium term is the recognition that a robust KM Strategy must build on earlier experiences. This is why a 'pre-cooked' strategy for the entire SAP period from the beginning of 2014 would not be advisable: the Secretariat, ITTC and ITTO's partners must be able to plan and implement immediate activities and review progress on those activities in Phases 1 and the early stages of Phase 2 in order to customize the resulting Phase 3 strategy to the real needs of ITTO.

The Secretariat should facilitate a process of reflection, consultation and planning during the period May-Aug 2014 to support the development of phase three of the KM Strategy for the 2015-2018 period. Activities in Phase 3 need to follow directly from Phases 1 and 2 (including the learning that occurs during implementation of those phases), and to be initially budgeted as part of ITTO's Biennial Work Programme 2015-2016. In order to validate the evolving path to which Phases 1 and 2 have contributed, it would be useful to undertake a small exercise to re-examine the overall goal, objective and strategic pillars of the KM Strategy as outlined in this document. Aside from the Secretariat reflections on this aspect, key stakeholders could be asked to provide their impressions of improvements made and challenges revealed in the previous phases. This would ensure the longer-term KM Strategy outlook would speak to the needs of ITTO's key stakeholders.

The third phase of the KM Strategy should also include a budget and a results framework that outlines a small set of clear expected outcomes and their associated activities/outputs.

Estimated Budget: USD30,000

Phase 3: January 2015 – December 2018

The specific goals and activities associated with this phase cannot be determined in advance, as they will be identified through the validation and extension process of the KM Strategy for the period 2015-2018, and should be closely linked to the Biennial Work Programme 2015-2016 (which should itself include an activity enabling implementation of the KM Strategy over the BWP period, unless the KM Strategy related activities are included in the Secretariat operational budget).

In general terms, it is expected that the KM Strategy during 2015-2018 will focus more energy on the facilitation of collaborative learning and knowledge sharing processes at a variety of levels:

Strategic Pillar 2 – Leveraging Knowledge through Partnerships

- Field level (including ITTO-supported projects as well as inputs to national legislation): this will remain the core 'source' of knowledge relevant to ITTO's activities
- Regional level: this is where the most promising opportunities for aggregation and consolidation will occur (e.g. sharing of project results, manuals and guidelines)
- Global level: this is where ITTO's role as facilitator of dialogue and international cooperation among producers and consumers around tropical timber trade and sustainable management will continue, and will be strengthened through its enhanced knowledge management practices at all levels (including inputs to global forest-related negotiations, such as CBD, CITES, UNCCC, etc.).

In addition to these general observations, the following activities are likely to be required on an ongoing basis:

ITTO Website enhancement

Strategic Pillar 1 - Enhancing Knowledge Sharing and Dissemination

This need not be a large component of Phase 3 of the KM Strategy, but a small annual budget to allow for adjustments/enhancements of website functionality should be built into the operational budget or the KM Strategy budget (as appropriate) to avoid a situation of required improvements with no available resources. This is a crucial point given the very high level of importance of the ITTO website to its partners (as well as to its reputation).

Second, if communications/knowledge sharing activities such as an e-newsletter and increased production of project-related outputs will be increased during this period, this would have budget implications.

Retention of institutional memory

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

This would probably focus mainly on handover processes and learning from staff before and/or shortly after retirement, but could expand to include other internal knowledge-sharing activities that help to ensure critical knowledge is not only in the minds and hands of individual staff members, but is effectively shared. It is likely that an average annual budget of approximately USD20,000 for engaging retired staff on a short-term basis for handover exercises (or for other institutional memory purposes) would be required. In addition, institutional memory embedded in the activities and individuals associated with various ITTO committees, the council and individual members is a topic that could be explored during the third phase.

Ongoing training/capacity building of staff

Strategic Pillar 3 – Enabling Knowledge Use

This should be part of the operating budget of the Secretariat, and therefore may not be included in the KM Strategy budget 2015-2018, although it has direct implications on the ability of the Secretariat to underpin the strategy.

Conclusions

The ITTO currently supports a wide variety of projects and activities in the area of tropical timber and SFM. It also manages a substantial volume of information related to conservation, sustainable use and trade in tropical forest resources. Finally, the ITTO plays an important role in linking producer and consumer countries and in promoting international collaboration over tropical timber.

The importance of knowledge and learning to ITTO is considerable: through the dialogues, syntheses of the state-of-the-art in various technical publications, and the learning that is constantly taking place in the context of project and activity implementation, knowledge and learning can in many ways be said to constitute the life-blood of ITTO.

It is therefore crucial that ITTO takes a conscious and strategic approach to KM and learning in order to maximize the impact of its work and the fulfillment of its mandate. It is clear that a great deal of experience, expertise and dedication already contribute to ITTO's substantial support for the enhancement of knowledge and learning as to tropical timber and SFM. The immediate challenge is to channel and build on that existing practice in strategic ways. This is the aim of the ITTO KM Strategy.

As it is evident from this document, the approach is purposely iterative and participatory rather than attempting to tackle all challenges big and small simultaneously and with the same level of energy and resources (which would in any case not be feasible), the challenges have been broken down into a manageable and logical sequence of activities.

These activities, starting from the smallest and most immediate (e.g. strengthening retention of institutional memory, promotion of more opportunities for inter-divisional interaction) to the more complex and longer-term (e.g. reconceptualization of the website and the information management linked to it, increased engagement in facilitation of networks/collaborative processes), are designed to bolster each other, and to create what will eventually be a self-sustaining momentum.

In order for this momentum to be built, later activities within the strategy can only be defined through reflection and adaptation based on earlier activities. While this results in a certain lack of specificity in the longer term (e.g. in Phase 3), it offers the possibility of a far more cost-effective and robust strategy, and a KM system that truly serves the knowledge and learning needs of ITTO and its partners.

Just as is currently the case, a central plank of the KM Strategy over the SAP period revolves around the ITTO website and the information and knowledge processes linked to it. This information provision element is a major added value provided by ITTO.

It is anticipated that the evolution of the KM Strategy will complement this important role with one that is geared to harnessing the learning and the new knowledge generated through ITTO-related dialogues, projects and activities, in ways that increase their depth and reach.

The fundamental evolution foreseen is from support for traditional dialogues, project/activity collaboration and information provision, to a more networked way of working, that elevates knowledge and learning to a more central position, and places responsibility for their generation and use in the hands of the people and institutions that are best placed to accomplish this.

Annex 1: ITTO KM Strategy and Action Plan Logical Framework

Goal	To fully harness the knowledge and innovation being generated in ITTO projects and programmes as well as from ITTO member countries and partners to contribute most effectively to trade, utilization and sustainable management of tropical timber resources	Indicator: international trade of tropical timber products based on sustainably managed and legally harvested tropical forests	Assumptions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KM Strategy approved by ITTC • Secretariat committed to the implementation of the strategy 	
Objective	To facilitate production, sharing and use of critical knowledge through outreach, support for networking and capitalization of experience, and capacity building	Indicator: ITTO recognized as key player in generation, retention & sharing of relevant knowledge at a variety of levels (project, membership, networks)		
Strategic Pillar	Activity	Expected Outcome(s)	Indicators	Assumptions/Risks
Enhancing knowledge sharing & dissemination	Re-examination of information infrastructure and related processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear understanding achieved of key stakeholders and information requirements • Clear understanding achieved of desired processes of document production • Possible paths to greater stakeholder engagement through ITTO website identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requirements specification for redesigned website • Descriptions for modified document flow • Description of desired core interactive website functionality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff person available • Complexity of conceptualizing move from current to more interactive website
	Redevelopment of ITTO website	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members and other stakeholders able to find and retrieve knowledge resources more easily • ITTO develops a more dynamic online presence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigned ITTO webpage with additional functionalities available • Improved paths for documents to move to website & other publication outlets • Paper-based approval processes replaced by electronic ones • On line engagement of implementing and other partners in key topics of interest to ITTO 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial resources available for implementation • Website redevelopment can be done with sufficient flexibility to evolve in future
Leveraging knowledge through partnerships	Pursuing targeted learning opportunities (networks)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ITTO plays a stronger role in collaborative initiatives related to tropical timber and SFM • ITTO becomes key facilitator of collaborative learning and knowledge sharing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New roles for ITTO staff/partners in existing collaborations • New partnerships formed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholders work together to develop collaboration opportunities • Secretariat staff can be redeployed to facilitation roles
Enabling knowledge use	Strengthening Secretariat knowledge-related capacities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retention of institutional memory is improved • ITTO Secretariat staff are able to take on new information and knowledge brokering roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A program to retain institutional memory is developed and implemented • Information based on target interviews of retiring personnel and videos available 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat staff available for training/capacity building

Strategic Pillar	Activity	Expected Outcome(s)	Indicators	Assumptions/Risks
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Formal capacity building program for staff available and implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retired/retiring staff willing to participate
	Enhancement of Secretariat working environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Knowledge of strategies, activities and achievement across divisions is improved Opportunities for internal collaboration are improved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical layout of ITTO offices provides increase spaces for spontaneous interaction Regular opportunities for inter-departmental exchange are created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pre-existing interest within Secretariat to increase internal exchange Changes in physical working environment will have direct positive benefits on collaboration
	Exploration of streamlined institutional processes and structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITTO project cycle is driven by strategic priorities Work of ITTC committees and Secretariat is harmonized 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes for regular and TP project cycle are harmonized/integrated Synergy of structure between Secretariat divisions and ITTC committees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Flexibility within ITTA Existing institutional arrangements can be modified with relatively low cost
	Pursuing targeted learning opportunities (projects)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ITTO projects are better able to highlight and benefit from learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline information covering project planning and early implementation available for higher numbers of projects Increased number of mid-term evaluation reports Reporting on meetings for sharing experiences on project monitoring and implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementers are equipped to devote more resources to baselines Mid-term reviews can be increased on a short-term basis without significant budgetary implications ITTO projects are increasingly awarded on the basis of illustrated learning opportunities.

Annex 2: Recommended Budget, ITTO KM Strategy, Phases 1 & 2, Jan-Dec 2014

Strategic Pillar	Activity	Task	Recommended Budget (USD)		
			Phase 1	Phase 2	
Enhancing knowledge sharing & dissemination	Re-examination of information infrastructure & related processes	Website requirements specification			
		Identification of main process barriers			
		Exploration of possible interactivity requirements	40,000		
	Redevelopment of ITTO website			100,000	
Leveraging knowledge through partnerships	Pursuing targeted learning opportunities (networks)	Leveraging broader learning opportunities		50,000	
Enabling knowledge use	Strengthening Secretariat knowledge-related capacities	Mechanism to preserve institutional memory	10,000	10,000	
		Proactive staff capacity building	15,000	15,000	
	Enhancement of Secretariat Working Environment	Breaking down divisional silos	No cost		
		Enhancement of office layout	20,000		
	Streamlining institutional processes & structures	Merging TPAC and Expert Panel	10,000		
		Alignment of ITTC committees & Secretariat structure	10,000		
	Pursuing targeted learning opportunities (projects)	Learning in project planning, monitoring and evaluation		20,000	
All Strategic Pillars	Validation & extension of KM Strategy through current SAP	Reflection on Phases 1 & 2, linkage with BWP 2015-2016		30,000	
Budget Phase 1			105,000		
Budget Phase 2				225,000	
Total Budget, Phases 1 & 2					330,000

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