



1st Regional Workshop on ITTO Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests

Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, 17-20 August 2015

Concept Note

Background

For almost three decades, ITTO has strived to assist its tropical member countries, through policy and project work, in implementing SFM on the ground to promote the sustainable supply of tropical forest goods and environmental services. The International Tropical Timber Council adopted Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests in 1990 as ITTO's first policy guidance document on the management of natural tropical forests. SFM is defined by ITTO as "the process of managing forest to achieve one or more clearly specified objectives of management with regard to the production of a continuous flow of desired forest products and services without undue reduction of its inherent values and future productivity and without undue undesirable effects on the physical and social environment." This definition of SFM emphasizes that forest-related activities should not damage the forest to the extent that its capacity to deliver products and services - such as timber, water and biodiversity conservation - is significantly reduced. SFM should balance the needs of different forest users so that its benefits and costs are shared equitably.

Building on such work, ITTO has subsequently generated a wide range of policy guidance, including its criteria and indicators for sustainable tropical forest management and a phased approach to tropical forest certification. In 2014, the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), the governing body of ITTO, adopted the Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests¹ which supersedes the 1990 guidelines. The new voluntary guidelines are designed to serve as guidance for addressing the policy, legal, governance, institutional, ecological, social and economic issues that need to be taken into account in the planning, implementation and evaluation of SFM in natural tropical forests to ensure the sustainable provision of forest goods and environmental services.

While the concept and knowledge of sustainable forest management (SFM) has been widely spread in the tropics, advancement of SFM is crucial to ensure the increased roles of tropical forests in climate change mitigation and adaptation, biodiversity conservation, and local community development. In particular, increasing the role of tropical forests in climate-change mitigation and adaptation has been recognized a global priority action in the context of reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation, plus the role of conservation, sustainable management of forests and enhancement of forest carbon stocks in developing countries, or known as REDD+ which will be part of the post-2015 climate change regime at the coming COP21 of UNFCCC in Paris in December 2015.

Addressing forests under the proposed Sustainable Development Goals², which are the post-2015 development agenda, is highlighted in SDG 15 "Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification,

¹ http://www.itto.int/direct/topics/topics_pdf_download/topics_id=4330&no=0&disp=inline

² Available at <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/sdgsproposal>

and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. In the proposed SDG 15, forest-specific targets are identified as follows:

- 15.2: By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests, and increase afforestation and reforestation by x% globally
- 15.b: Mobilize significantly resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management, and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance sustainable forest management, including for conservation and reforestation

Therefore, an important challenge for many tropical countries includes more effective implementation of SFM through increasing the competitiveness of SFM and the generation of more revenues from forests. This requires the strengthening of enabling policy, legal and institutional arrangements and forest-related good governance and management. In addition, there is a need for improved knowledge of environmental services provided by tropical forests as they are a promising opportunity to create value to forest resource and to prevent forest loss, particularly in the case of natural tropical forests.

Objectives of the workshop

The Kuala Lumpur workshop to be co-organized by the ITTO Secretariat, the Forest Department of Peninsular Malaysia and the Forest Research Institute Malaysia with support of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment aims to contribute to more effective implementation of sustainable forest management (SFM) in the Asia-Pacific Region. Specifically, the workshop intends to:

- Review concept of SFM and key issues of sustainable management of natural tropical forests;
- Stimulate the application of the ITTO Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forest for the development and implementation of national and sub-national guidelines for SFM;
- Discuss main challenges and lessons learned for designing and implementing SFM at local and national levels in Asia-Pacific; and
- Identify recommended actions for national-level initiatives for effective implementation of SFM in Asia-Pacific

To ensure informed discussions and outcomes for the workshop, the ITTO Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forest will be a main reference to the workshop. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about these Guidelines and share their SFM experiences and views. The Kuala Lumpur workshop is based on the implementation of ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2015-2016: Activity 4 “Promote the publication, dissemination and application of the ITTO Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests”

The outcome of the workshop will be an important input to ITTO Side Event at the 2015 World Forestry Congress (7-11 September 2015, Durban, South Africa). It will also be reported to the ITTC at its 51st Session in Kuala Lumpur on 16-21 November 2015).

Participants

It is expected the Kuala Lumpur workshop will be attended by around 30 participants. Invited countries from Asia-pacific are: Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Viet Nam. Due to the budget constraint of the workshop, sponsored participants will be limited.

Contact persons

Dr. Hwan-ok Ma
Projects Manager, Division of Forest Management
International Tropical Timber Organization (ITTO)
E-mail: ma@itto.int

Mr. Muhammad Ezhar Yusuf
Assistant Director
International Affairs Division
Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia (FDPM)
E-mail: ezhar@forestry.gov.my

Dr. Ismail Parlan
Senior Research Officer
Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)
E-mail: ismailp@frim.gov.my

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