



INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL

Distr.
GENERAL

ITTC(LI)/5
5 October 2015

Original: ENGLISH

FIFTY-FIRST SESSION
16 - 21 November 2015
Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

ENHANCING COOPERATION BETWEEN ITTO and CITES

[Decisions 3(XVI), 7(XXXIV) and 2(XXXVII)]

[Item 10b of the Provisional Agenda]

This document reports on implementation of the ITTO-CITES Program for Tropical Tree Species, currently in its second phase. Work to develop this Program was originally included in ITTO's 2006-2007 Biennial Work Program (BWP) which allowed a grant proposal seeking funding for an ITTO-CITES collaborative capacity building Program to be developed. The proposal was submitted to the European Union through the European Commission, which agreed to fund 80% of the nearly \$4 million (3 million euro) first phase budget at the end of 2006. The activity has continued under ITTO's 2008-2009, 2010-2011, 2012-2013, 2013-2014 and 2015-2016 BWPs with EU funding and additional contributions from the USA, Switzerland, Japan, the Netherlands, Norway, Germany, New Zealand, the private sector and the BPF. The Program is managed by ITTO with assistance from three regional coordinators and the CITES Secretariat, and is guided by a program advisory committee.

Since the demand for Program support substantially exceeded available resources under the first phase, ITTO and CITES submitted a second grant application to the EU through the EC covering the 4 year period 2012-15 for a total amount of 7.5 million euro (about \$9 million, one-third of which is to come from other donors). This grant application was approved and the first installment of funds was received in early 2012. Additional pledges were received during 2011-15 from China, Germany, the Netherlands, Norway, USA, and the private sector. These pledges currently make up over 70% of the non-EC funding required under the phase two grant agreement with the EU through the EC. Given the continuing strong demand for support under the Program, a possible third phase is currently being discussed with the EU and other donors. However, it is unlikely that any new funding agreement can be concluded with the EU prior to 2017 so other donors are urged to continue supporting the Program in 2015-16.

The ITTO-CITES Program has now nearly completed implementation under the second funding grant provided by the EU. Progress to date has been remarkable, with over 40 activities implemented under the Program since this second phase began. Country-specific activities have been approved and are now underway or have been completed in Brazil, Cameroon, Congo, DRC, Guatemala, Indonesia, Madagascar, Malaysia and Peru as of August 2015, focusing on African species *Pericopsis elata* (afroformosa), *Prunus africana* (African cherry), and several *Dalbergia* (rosewood) and *Diospyros* (ebony) species from Madagascar; Asian species *Aquilaria/Gyrinops* spp. (agarwood) and *Gonystylus* spp. (ramin); and Latin American species *Cedrela odorata*, *Swietenia macrophylla*, *Dalbergia retusa* and *D. stevensonii*. An additional 15 activities have been submitted by countries in liaison with the regional coordinators for possible Program funding when additional resources become available. In addition to the above-mentioned activities, an additional eight activities have been funded under the Trade and Market Transparency thematic program based on a provision of the EU funding grant calling for 20% of the EU funds provided to be directed to activities with objectives relevant to both the TMT and CITES programs.

Subsequent to the last progress report to Council at its 50th Session, an independent mid-term evaluation mission was carried out, during which a consultant visited Africa (DRC) and Latin America (Brazil) as well as key Program donors and stakeholders. The report of the mid-term evaluation, which has been circulated to all Program stakeholders and is available from the Secretariat, found that the Program is achieving its objectives and is well received by all participating countries. The ITTO and CITES Secretariats are ensuring that the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation are being implemented in remaining Program operations during 2015 and that the concept note being developed for the proposed Phase 3 of the Program takes full account of these recommendations.

ITTO has developed a program website which includes information on the Program (www.itto.int/ITTO at work/CITES/). All activity completion reports and other relevant information are posted on the ITTO website. The Program newsletter (available on the Program website) continues to be emailed to all donors, participating countries and other stakeholders. Various outreach materials have been prepared to provide information on Program outputs, including three videos highlighting work in each tropical region (available on the Program website), brochures, posters, banners, etc. All outreach materials clearly indicate donors to the Program's second phase.

Consultations with the CITES Secretariat have continued throughout 2015 to guide and focus the Program's activities. The ITTO and CITES Secretariats also continue to organize and attend regular meetings with each other and key donors/stakeholders to discuss the Program. A side event will be co-hosted by the ITTO and CITES Secretariats in September 2015 during the World Forestry Congress in Durban, South Africa.

The CITES Plants Committee will convene in Tbilisi, Georgia from 19-23 October 2015 (after the finalization of this document). The ITTO Secretariat will participate actively in this meeting, presenting updates on work under the Program and undertaking consultations with donors, target countries and the CITES Secretariat. The Program Advisory Committee will meet during the CITES Plants Committee meeting and may meet again on the margins of this Council Session at which the CITES Secretariat is represented.

The ITTO-CITES cooperation fostered through this Program is a strategic alliance that can benefit many tree species in trade beyond those listed in CITES Appendices. Both CITES and ITTO have been promoting sustainable management of tropical forests for many years, which is why this partnership is so successful. The governing bodies of both organizations have recognized the value of the alliance, ITTO through the Council decisions referenced in the title of this document and CITES through its COP Resolution Conf. 14.4 on *Cooperation between CITES and ITTO regarding trade in tropical timber*, calling for this cooperation to continue.

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