

THEMATIC PROGRAMME ON
REDUCING DEFORESTATION AND FOREST DEGRADATION AND
ENHANCING ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES IN TROPICAL FORESTS

Programme Profile

RATIONALE

Tropical forests play a vital role in sustaining a large proportion of the world's biodiversity, maintaining land-use options and water resources, contributing to the carbon cycle and providing other key services to forest-dependent people. The ITTA, 2006, commits ITTO to promoting a *'better understanding of the contribution of ... environmental services to the sustainable management of tropical forests with the aim of enhancing the capacity of members to develop strategies to strengthen such contributions in the context of sustainable forest management...'*

Tropical forests provide an important service by protecting watersheds that supply forest-dwelling and urban communities with high-quality water. Some ITTO member countries have developed payment schemes for environmental services related to watershed management, which could inform similar initiatives in other tropical countries. Tropical forests are also of enormous importance for the conservation of biodiversity. They contain more species than other biomes and a high proportion of these species are threatened. Services such as these and others, including carbon storage and disaster prevention, may be achieved simultaneously through sustainable forest management.

Deforestation and forest degradation in tropical forests have reduced the quality of many forest environmental services. Often, poorly implemented timber harvesting has damaged remaining trees and caused soil erosion and compaction, while the conversion of forests to other land uses has also led to the loss or degradation of many services. The introduction or strengthening of sustainable forest management, forest restoration, afforestation and reforestation in such areas can play an important role in restoring environmental services and reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation. ITTO has a long track record of working with member countries and partners to promote such activities through field projects and capacity-building.

GENERAL OBJECTIVE

The general objective of the Thematic Programme is to help improve livelihoods by reducing deforestation and forest degradation and enhancing environmental services through the sustainable management of tropical forests, forest restoration, afforestation, reforestation and other related activities.

PROGRAMME STRATEGY

The Thematic Programme would focus primarily on four strategic areas:

I. Assessment and diagnosis

The quality of planning for forest-related interventions depends on the availability and accuracy of data and information related to the state of and threats to forest resources. Activities to be supported in this area could include:

- Forest cover and forest resources assessment, monitoring and verification systems
- Pilot multi-purpose forest inventories
- Estimation of forest carbon stocks, including emissions from deforestation and forest degradation based on already existing tools for this purpose

- Assessment of policy, legal and institutional frameworks to promote biodiversity conservation, carbon storage, watershed conservation and other environmental services through sustainable forest management
- Land and forest tenure assessments
- Capacity-building, institutional strengthening, training and outreach.

II. Enabling conditions and capacity-building

Activities here would be aimed at establishing enabling policy, legal and institutional frameworks and governance related to environmental services and the reduction of emissions from deforestation and degradation, including by strengthening tenure security and resource access. They would be grouped under four headings: Formulation/enhancement of national forest policies, including legislation; Training; and Proposal formulation.

III. Demonstration activities

The Programme would facilitate demonstration projects on sustainable forest management, forest restoration, reforestation and afforestation to help realize the benefits of environmental services, including in local communities.

IV. Scaling up and dissemination

Programme support would be provided for activities dedicated to the replication and scaling up of successful demonstration projects related to environmental services schemes in tropical forests. The Programme would also provide support for sharing information and lessons learned locally, nationally and internationally.

In all four areas, ITTO would undertake complementary cross-cutting actions to facilitate the implementation of the Programme in an integrated manner.

ANTICIPATED OUTPUTS/OUTCOMES

The intended outcomes of the Thematic Programme are: (i) Increased area of forest under sustainable management, and reduced deforestation and forest degradation in tropical timber producing forests; (ii) Improved capacities to develop and implement feasible policy options and incentives mechanisms to promote environmental services through sustainable forest management; (iii) Improved livelihoods for forest dwellers and other stakeholders directly involved in the supply of environmental services through the sustainable management of tropical forests; (iv) Improved practices to promote and stimulate community involvement in the supply of environmental services from the sustainable management of tropical forests, and their wide dissemination; and (v) Improved resilience of tropical forest ecosystems and forest-dependent communities.

POTENTIAL PARTNERS/COLLABORATING AGENCIES

The Programme would be implemented in close cooperation with ITTO's Civil Society Advisory Group and Trade Advisory Group and relevant international, regional and national organizations and bodies, including the UN-REDD Fund, the World Bank's Forest Carbon Partnership Facility and the planned Forest Investment Program.

INDICATIVE BUDGET AND TIMEFRAME

An indicative three-year budget that would result in significant improvements in the three tropical regions would be US\$18 million.

Pledged	US\$ 3,500,000
Balance	US\$ 14,500,000
TOTAL	US\$ 18,000,000

POTENTIAL DONORS

The Government of Norway has made an initial pledge of US\$ 3,500,000. The Governments of Japan, Switzerland and U.S.A. have indicated their intention to contribute to this Thematic Programme.