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REPORT ON COMPLETED PROJECTS, PRE-PROJECTS AND BWP PROJECT-BASED ACTIVITIES

IN THE FIELD OF REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

REPORT ON COMPLETED PROJECTS, PRE-PROJECTS AND BWP PROJECT-BASED ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT

A. COMPLETED PROJECTS AND PRE-PROJECTS

COMPLETED PRE-PROJECTS

None.

COMPLETED PROJECTS

(1) PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F) Enhancing the Implementation of Landscape Management of Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) in Riau Province of Sumatra Island, Sumatra, Indonesia – Phase I

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:			US$	492,014
ITTO Budget:			US$	250,000
Government of Republic of Korea	US$	250,000		
Government of Indonesia			US$	11,424
Sinarmas Forestry & Partners			US$	230,590

Implementing Agency:	Agency for Standardization of Environment and Forestry Instruments (ASEFI)
Period of Approval:	Rev.3: Approved in September 2021
Starting Date and Duration:	April 2023 / Phase I - 24 months
Approved Revised Date of Project Completion:	First Extension until 30 September 2025 (NOL F25-0006)

I. Introduction

The project was approved in the Spring 2014 Project Cycle and later received an extension at the request of the Indonesia Ministry of Environment and Forestry, in accordance with ITTO regulations. Partial funding was secured from the Republic of Korea ($100,000) during ITTC 54 in November 2018, and an additional $150,000 during ITTC 55 in December 2019. The Implementing Agency subsequently divided the project into Phase I and Phase II to align with available funding for immediate implementation. The revised proposal was approved in September 2021 through the online no-objection procedure. The project agreement for Phase I was signed in December 2022, with the first instalment of project funds disbursed in April 2023 following the necessary administrative arrangements.

II. Project Objective

The Giam Siak Kecil Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) covering approximately 705,000 ha in the Riau province Sumatra, was designated a public-private partnership biosphere reserve by the UNESCO's World Network of Biosphere Reserves in 2009.

The project's primary goal is to strengthen the framework for sustainable management and conservation of GSK-BR. It addresses several key challenges, including the lack of an integrated strategic

management plan, weak institutional capacity for biosphere reserve implementation, and low community participation in management operations.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "Planning framework GSK-BR supporting standardization for FOLU Net Sink 2030", the project successfully established an enhanced landscape planning framework. Spatial data analysis utilizing 11 forestry thematic maps was conducted to redefine and verify the zonation across 703,932 ha spanning core, buffer, and transition areas. It updated databases documenting 200 forest plant species and 19 mammal species to reinforce wildlife corridors and safeguard key endangered species such as the Sumatran elephant and tiger. These achievements culminated the formulation of an Integrated Strategic Management Plan (ISMP 2024-2028), and submission an integrated funding proposal to the Ministry of Forestry to support Indonesia's FOLU Net Sink 2030.

Under Output 2, "Institutional capacity to manage GSK-BR based on standardization strengthened", the project revitalized the GSK-BR Management Coordinating Board (MCB) via Riau Governor's Decree No. Kpts. 765/VIII/2025, signed a work plan, and equipped its secretariat. It trained 53 professionals from 28 stakeholder institutions. Additionally, it formulated and adopted the Biosphere Reserve Standard and compliance SOPs across eight conservation entities.

Under Output 3, "Support of stakeholders on operational management of GSK-BR promoted", stakeholder dialogues were conducted in 15 villages with 375 participants and 4 livelihood demonstration plots were established. The project trained 88 local farmers (43% women) in honeybee cultivation, organic and upland rice farming, and batik stamping. Additionally, it launched a public campaign releasing 27 news articles and publications while expanding conservation networks at the 15th SeaBRNET meeting.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

Phase I of PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F) laid the foundation for co-managing GSK-BR by reactivating the MCB, establishing a database, and supporting local alternative livelihoods. Incorporating the ISMP into Riau Province's Medium-Term Development Plan as a provincial strategic area secured policy and financial sustainability, contributing to Indonesia's FOLU Net Sink 2030 and SDGs through peatland and species conservation.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

Key lessons learned highlight that political commitment, especially from the Governor of Riau, was crucial for restoring institutional legitimacy. Local NGOs played a vital catalytic role by bridging communication between communities and the government. Empowering village-level leaders was essential for sustaining local engagement and spreading good practices. Integrating forestry, agriculture, and tourism aligned conservation with community livelihood improvement. Long-term sustainability is reinforced through a clear exit strategy, placing continued management oversight under the MCB with support from national and regional budgets (APBN/APBD).

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received the project completion report, technical reports and a satisfactory final financial audit, thus the Committee may wish to declare the project as duly completed, subject to the satisfactory review of the final audit report by the ITTO Secretariat. Reports and outreach products produced by the project are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PD712_13-Rev.3-F-Phase-I.

(2) PD 849/17 Rev.2 (F) Increasing Commercial Reforestation Competitiveness in Costa Rica

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:			US$	422,165
ITTO Budget:			US$	335,765
Government of Japan:	US$	235,765		
Government of USA:	US$	100,000		
Government of Costa Rica:			US$	86,400

Implementing Agency: COSTA RICAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY, SCHOOL OF FORESTRY/RESEARCH CENTRE FOR FORESTRY INNOVATION (CIF)

Period of Approval: Rev.2: Approved in November 2020

Starting Date and Duration: June 2022 / 36 months

I. Introduction

The project was fully funded at ITTC 57 in November 2021, and the project agreement was duly signed in April 2022, which subsequently followed project implementation. The executing agency presented the outputs and impacts of the project during the 59th session of the Committee on Forest Management and submitted a completion report in January 2026.

II. Project objective

The development objective of the project was to strengthen commercial reforestation in Costa Rica. The project specifically intended to increase the competitiveness of commercial reforestation by developing effective financing schemes for forest plantations, silviculture manuals for increasing their productivity, and develop value-added timber products, which in turn will improve forest producers' income.

III. Project achievements and outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "An innovative financing developed for commercial reforestation with its corresponding monitoring system", a state forest financing mechanism targeting small-scale fast-growth timber production was developed and validated. The financing mechanism called SIPMABE (Sistema Productivo de Madera a Baja Escala—*Small-Scale Timber Production System*) combines loans with a pre-existing payment for ecosystem services. In the credit modality, producers receive a loan at a fixed rate of 5% for a maximum of seven years to plant fast-growing tree species. The first call for applications under this financial mechanism was launched in September 2025. An article describing in more detail this financial mechanism was published in TFU issue No. 35/1, available at www.itto.int/tfu/2026/04/13/advocacy_action_impact_supporting_sustainable_tropical_forestry_on_all_fronts/

Under Output 2, "Commercial reforestation productivity is increased", activities for this output included establishing a baseline of forest plantations with data from 1,719 plots. A silvicultural package developed with manuals that providing guidance on soil requirements, plantation establishment, silviculture, management of pests and diseases, expected growth, cost estimation and expected profitability for five

species, namely melina (*Gmelina arborea*), balsa (*Ochroma pyramidale*), laurel (*Cordia alliodora*), almendro (*Dipteryx oleifera*), and pilon (*Hyeronyma alchorneoides*). Manuals were also published on commercial forest plantations establishment and assessment. Genetic improvement trials were also conducted.

Under Output 3, "High value-added timber products have been developed", a total of 10 prototypes of timber products were developed based on an assessment of the timber market and the capabilities of the national timber industry and stakeholder consultations for the uptake of five of the prototypes by the industry. Dissemination material of the prototypes was published and distributed.

Outputs of the project, including promotional materials, a video and two published articles in ITTO's Tropical Forest Update are available from the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PD849_17-Rev.2-F.

IV. Outcomes and impacts

The project established a unified approach for solving longstanding issues of stagnated commercial reforestation and declining supply of domestic timber in Costa Rica by bringing together stakeholders and providing the needed tools for establishing successful forest plantations, bridging timber production with potential market opportunities and developing a financial mechanism for their long-term viability.

V. Lessons learnt and sustainability

Participatory approaches, along with capacity building and technical assistance were crucial elements for successfully executing planned project activities. The commitment of the Government of Costa Rica in deploying the financial mechanisms developed has been instrumental for the achievement of the project's developing objective.

VI. Concluding remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received the completion report, technical reports, promotional materials and a satisfactory final financial audit report, thus the Committee may wish to declare the project as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the project are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PD849_17-Rev.2-F.

(3) PD 932/23 (F) Assessment and Dissemination of Knowledge and Experience for Ex-Situ Conservation and Plantation of Caoba in Northern Coastal Area, Peru

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:			US$	123,294
ITTO Budget:			US$	84,784
Government of Korea:	US$	84,784		
COSTA VERDE:			US$	38,510

Implementing Agency: COSTA VERDE INICIATIVA 20X20

Period of Approval: August 2023

Starting Date and Duration: November 2023 / 12 months

I. Introduction

The project derived from the concept note CN-22014 received an expression of interest by the Republic of Korea at ITTC 58 in November 2022. The project document was approved in August 2023, the project agreement was duly signed in November 2023, and the project commenced implementation in the same month.

II. Project Objective

Caoba also known as mahogany *(Swietenia macrophylla* King), is a high-commercial value species listed as an endangered on CITES appendices. Peru which used to be major exporter of the species in the 1990s now imports it. The project's specific objective was to conduct a comprehensive analysis of successful experiences and lessons learned from *ex-situ* conservation and plantations of Caoba in northern Peru.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "Systematizing and publishing knowledge and experiences on *ex-situ* mahogany plantations", studied and documented existing *ex-situ* cultivation experiences of mahogany in semi-arid areas along the northern coast of Peru, including those of Vista Florida farm, INAGRO, CHOCOCAL and El Olmos-Los Cedros farm. In addition, the project collected wood samples from plantations in the region of study and conducted laboratory tests of its physical-mechanical properties, which showed good results.

Under Output 2, "Expanding interest of government and businesses for investing in mahogany conservation and plantation", several workshops and dissemination events were held during project implementation, and results of output one presented to government officials, entrepreneurs and other stakeholders in the project area. Noteworthy events include a regional workshop held in July 2024, with support from the regional government of Lambayeque, that raised awareness of the economic potential of mahogany plantations in the region and a meeting held in Lima in May 2025 at the headquarters of the Peruvian Forest Service to present the results to government officials.

Under Output 3, "Enhancing social interest in mahogany conservation and plantation", existing government incentives for plantations were also introduced to participants. During ITTC-61, two private sector representatives made a presentation highlighting the potential and regional interest in mahogany plantations. The executing agency submitted a follow-up project proposal to ITTO [PD 948/25 Rev.1 (M)], which aims to promote the establishment of experimental commercial plantations in the area.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

The project revealed the potential of *ex-situ* mahogany plantations for both commercial production and forest landscape restoration in semi-arid areas along the northern coast of Peru. It also made recommendations for addressing major structural factors limiting investment in the sector, including legal uncertainty, a lack of zoning of land suitable for plantations, poor infrastructure, a lack of innovation and incentives.

The project helped to establish a broad-based interest group that supports the development of a project proposal to expand *ex-situ* commercial mahogany plantations in Lambayeque.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

The viability of mahogany plantations depends not only on the right physical conditions, but also on the availability of technical knowledge; adequate support from private sector, regional and national

authorities, and on the creation of a strategy that improves the supply of forest products and contributes to the country's economic and sustainable development.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received the project completion report, technical reports and a satisfactory final financial audit, thus the Committee may wish to declare the project as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the project, including a TFU article, are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PD932_23-F.

(4) PP-A/56-342A Strengthening SFM Standards and Timber Legality Framework in Myanmar

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:			US$	518,790
ITTO Budget:			US$	378,930
Government of Japan:	US$	378,930		
MFCC (in-kind):			US$	139,860

Implementing Agency:	MYANMAR FOREST CERTIFICATION COMMITTEE (MFCC)
Starting Date and Duration:	February 2021 / 24 months
Approved Revised Date of Project Completion:	First Extension until 31 January 2024 (NOL F23-0018) Second Extension until 31 March 2024 (NOL F24-0003) Third Extension until 31 December 2025 (NOL F25-0043)

I. Introduction

The project intended to address the challenges Myanmar faces with market access for timber and on the continued improvement of Myanmar Forest Certification System (MFCS), and Myanmar Timber Legality Assurance System (MTLAS).

The executing agency submitted a completion report in July 2024 along with a request for the utilization of unspent funds in the amount of USD 24,667 to develop a sustainability plan for ensuring the continuity of project outputs. Such request was made by the Delegation of Myanmar during the 58th session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management, in December 2024. This request was subsequently approved by the donor at the same session.

II. Project Objective

The project's specific objective was to strengthen national certification systems of forest management and chain of custody to ensure the sustainability and legality of timber and timber products.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "Myanmar certification and timber legality assurance systems improved", the Digitalized Timber Tracking System (DTTS) was piloted, introducing end-to-end traceability from stump to export through QR code tagging, geolocation, and digital data integration, building on a "dual key" control

mechanism, whereby the Forest Department ensures legality through the Certificate of Legality for Forest Products, and the Myanma Timber Enterprise provides traceability through the Delivery Order.

In addition, comprehensive revisions to MTLAS and MFCS led to the upgrade of MTLAS into version 2.00, with the subsequent endorsement of the national standard MMS MTLAS 56:2024, thus consolidating dispersed procedures into a structured, risk-based legality framework aligned with international due diligence expectations.

Thanks to the project, a phased Due Diligence System and a Notification Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Certification Bodies, were introduced, serving as a risk management layer that bridges Myanmar's state-regulated control system with global risk-based due diligence frameworks.

The project piloted a certification initiative for private plantations, thereby laying the groundwork for future certification uptake.

Under Output 2, "Capacity of key stakeholders in the monitoring and verification of the sustainability and legality of timber and timber products increased", a training for trainers on the DTTS was delivered to a total of 116 participants, as well as training on compliance with timber certification based on ISO 1765 and 17021. Study tours to Viet Nam and Malaysia took place in March and June 2024, respectively, gaining further insights on timber legality assurance systems.

Under Output 3, "Effective outreach and communication systems of MFCC for forest sustainability and timber legality established and operational", the executing agency developed a website (https://myanmarforestcertification.org/) where relevant resources and news on sustainable forest management and forest certification in Myanmar have been made available. During project implementation a total of 5 newsletters were produced and distributed.

Updates on the MTLAS were presented at the 10th ASEAN Regional Workshop on Timber Legality Assurance and Traceability, held in Surabaya, Indonesia, in December 2025, and several others knowledge-sharing and awareness raising events were held, including at the University of Forestry and Environmental Science in September 2025, which were followed by social media posts.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

The project has been instrumental in transforming Myanmar's timber governance framework from a fragmented, document-based system into an integrated, system-ready assurance platform. Overall, the project has established a national "readiness platform" for timber legality assurance and forest certification, based on the enhanced systems and standards, and while current external conditions limit full market utilization, the project has ensured that Myanmar's forestry sector remains technically credible, institutionally prepared, and strategically positioned for future international re-engagement.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

A major lesson from the project is that technical system development and institutional capacity building can continue independently of immediate market access and that such efforts are critical in preserving long-term readiness and preventing the erosion of institutional capacity.

Myanmar's timber governance has historically relied on document-based control mechanisms, particularly the Delivery Order (DO) and Certificate of Legality for Forest Products (CLFP). The project demonstrated that transitioning toward system-based and risk-oriented approaches (DDS, CoC) requires time, while institutional support, operational practices, and stakeholder behavior must evolve in parallel. Finally, integration of existing national systems could be more effective than replacement.

As for sustainability, the completion report describes recommended future actions, including the progressive operationalization of MTLAS v2.00 and its full integration with DTTS; expansion of pilot applications into full-scale implementation across the supply chain; and continued alignment with international market requirements.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received the completion report, several technical reports, promotional materials as well as a satisfactory final financial audit report, thus the Committee may wish to declare this BWP Project-based Activity as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the BWP Project-based Activity are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PP-A_56-342A.

(5) PP-A/59-352 Community Empowerment in Forest Management and Forest Landscape Restoration in Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:		US$	479,500
ITTO Budget:		US$	258,000
Government of Japan:	US$ 258,000		
Government of Sarawak, Malaysia:		US$	221,500

Implementing Agency:	FOREST DEPARTMENT SARAWAK (FDS)
Starting Date and Duration:	April 2023 to March 2024 / 12 months
Approved Revised Date of Project Completion:	First extension until October 2024 (MOFA-Japan's letter of 25 March 2024 and ITTO's letter L.24-0021) Second extension until 30 June 2025 (MOFA-Japan's letter of 27 May 2025 and ITTO's letter L.25-0084)

I. Introduction

The project was developed in early 2023 through Japan's Emergency Supplementary Budget Programme. The project agreement was signed in March 2023, project activities started in September 2023, and the project was extended until the end of June 2025.

II. Project Objective

The project sought to empower local communities in forest management and landscape restoration by strengthening sustainable livelihoods. To achieve the objective, the project focused on two main outputs: i) empowering and training local communities in sustainable forest management and community-based ecotourism, and ii) enhancing collaborative forest landscape restoration (FLR) through local community participation and supportive policy development.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "Local communities are empowered and trained in forest management and community-based ecotourism", capacity building for local communities was conducted in forest

management, forest management certification, conflict resolution, conservation and FLR (imparted to 20 Penan villages, 8 Kenyah villages, 3 Kelabit villages and one Saban village); community-based ecotourism (attended by 39 participants from 27 villages); and on basic wiring, wood craft and furniture making (attended by 25 participants from 27 villages). A benchmark visit to an existing successful community-based tourism venture was also conducted and attended by representatives from 25 communities from 16 villages.

Basic infrastructure was improved for the forest communities in the Upper Baram Forest Area (UBFA), including the construction of 200- and 300-meters footpaths at Lio Mato and Long Lamam respectively; upgrading and repairing works for water gravity feed system and the community hall at Ba Muboi.

Under Output 2, "Collaborative FLR is enhanced through supportive policy development", a FLR demonstration plot focused on natural regeneration was established and maintained at Ba' Data Bila. The native species considered and planted for FLR include Meranti Tembaga (*Shorea leprosula*), Kapur Paji (*Dryobalanops lanceolata*), Durian (*Durio* sp.), Nyatoh (*Palaquium* sp.), and Empenit (*Lithocarpus* sp.)

The Asia-Pacific Regional Conference on FLR, an output of the project, was organized by FDS in August 2024 under the theme "Forest as Climate Champions: Harnessing Restoration for Global Resilience", with attendance of over 300 participants, which was later followed by an engagement session with government agencies and community leaders in mid-February 2025 in Miri and a closing workshop in June 2025, which was attended by 66 participants from the various communities involved in the project.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

The project has provided an opportunity for Forest Department Sarawak to enhance its relationship with local indigenous communities in the UBFA, learn about their immediate needs and build mutual trust, thus fostering a spirit of shared ownership and long-term commitment to forest stewardship. Project outcomes are feeding future strategies for expanding community-based ecotourism and green economic models aligned with Sarawak government's priorities.

Project interventions have fostered greater community ownership, strengthened technical capacity, and improved socioeconomic resilience, contributing directly to the project's objective of empowering local communities in sustainable forest and landscape management.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

Some valuable lessons learned from the project include the need for strong institutional coordination, adaptive management, systematic documentation, and continuous stakeholder engagement to ensure effective implementation. Challenges related to difficult terrain, community dynamics, local politics, and socio-economic conditions further highlighted the importance of flexibility, trust-building, and adaptive planning throughout project implementation.

Project sustainability will be ensured by the inclusion of follow up activities and projects in the 13th Malaysia Plan to be implemented by federal and state projects.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received the completion report, technical reports, a satisfactory final financial audit report, and the return of unspent funds in the amount of US$37,544.47, thus the Committee may wish to declare this project as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the project, included a published TFU article, are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PP-A_59-352-BWP-11-e-Sarawak.

(6) PP-A/60-367 Critical Upliftment of Local Livelihoods: Urgent Actions for Community-Based Conservation and Development in Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:		US$	289,039.24
ITTO Budget:		US$	139,039.24
Government of Japan:	US$ 139,039.24		
Government of Sarawak, Malaysia:		US$	150,000.00

Implementing Agency: FOREST DEPARTMENT SARAWAK (FDS)

Starting Date and Duration: April 2025 / 12 months

Approved Revised Date of Project Completion: First extension until 30 March 2026 (NOL L25-0022)

I. Introduction

The Upper Baram Forest Area (UBFA), scattered over an area of 283,500 hectares, consists of 32 communities from various ethnic groups, namely the Penan, Kenyah, Kelabit, and Saban, and holds immense significance due to its rich biodiversity, critical role in maintaining ecological balance, and its importance as a vital resource for local livelihoods. This project sought to empower forest-dependent indigenous communities through community-based conservation and forest landscape restoration while promoting sustainable livelihoods.

The project was funded in March 2024 thanks to the generous contributions of the Government of Japan, the project agreement was duly signed in September 2024, and a satisfactory inception report was submitted to the Secretariat on 7 April 2025, triggering the first instalment of the project in the same month.

II. Project Objective

The project's development objective was to contribute to the sustainable management of Upper Baram Forests for resilient local communities and ecosystems, while its specific objective was to empower local communities in community-based conservation and landscape restoration for sustainable livelihoods.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1 "Establish sustainable livelihood enhancement programs for the affected indigenous communities", early consultations and stakeholder engagements took place in February 2025, which helped to develop a roadmap to address some of the communities' urgent needs and identify infrastructure improvement activities to be carried out. Capacity building was conducted through several activities, including a community-based conservation workshop hold in July 2025 with the representation of 66 communities; the active participation of the communities in the celebrations for the International Day of Forests hold in June 2025 under the theme "Forest and Food", where they showcased their culture, traditional knowledge, and forest-based products to a wider audience; hands-on training on tree planting and restoration practices, which resulted in the planting of 500 seedlings of the Shorea genus in the Kenyah Jamok Community Forest Reserve.

The project was instrumental in improving infrastructure facilities as follows:

- Long main 4 km jungle footpath and two wooden bridges;
- Long Banga 1 km concrete footpath and two wooden bridges;
- Long Tungan 100 m concrete footpath;
- Pangaran Kelian jungle footpath; and
- Upgraded sanitary facilities at Ba Data Bila.

The project produced a video entitled "Urgent actions for community-based conservation and development in Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia". Released on the occasion of the 2026 International Day of the World's Indigenous Peoples (9 August 2026), the video, captures in their own words the stories of Penan, Kenyah, Kelabit and Saban peoples living in the Upper Braam and the deep connection of their lives and culture with nature. It also showcases how through the assistance of ITTO projects, implemented by Forest Department Sarawak, they are shaping their future and the future of the forest they inhabit. The video is available from the ITTO YouTube channel at https://youtu.be/S2oBwjeAZKA?si=ws0yscLT6DJOJkQx.

Under Output 2 "Develop a management plan for ecosystem restoration and conservation for selected sites within the UBFA", the Sela'an–Tekiwit Community-based Conservation and Development Plan was developed through a participatory approach where communities were actively engaged from the initial field assessments through to the finalisation of the plan, contributing their traditional knowledge and local perspectives. The Management and Development Plan integrated scientific assessments with local knowledge and provided a practical framework for long-term governance. The proposed pilot conservation area covered 46,799 hectares. Based on stakeholder mapping, forest resource assessments, socio-economic studies, and landslide susceptibility analysis, the area was zoned into three management zones: conservation zones, sustainable forest management zones, and community development zones.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

Local communities were empowered to actively participate in community-based conservation and forest landscape restoration, resulting in strengthened stewardship of forest resources, improved biodiversity conservation, enhanced ecosystem resilience, and uplifted livelihoods. Through participatory planning, capacity building, strengthened local governance, and community-led implementation, the project established a community-based conservation pilot area guided by a comprehensive Management and Development Plan, community monitoring mechanisms, forest restoration initiatives, and sustainable livelihood programmes.

Capacity-building programmes significantly enhanced the knowledge, skills, and confidence of local communities in community-based conservation, forest landscape restoration, community-based ecotourism, and alternative livelihood development. Exposure visits, workshops, and knowledge-sharing activities increased community awareness of sustainable natural resource management, strengthened local leadership, and improved communities' capacity to plan, implement, and manage conservation initiatives.

Improved infrastructure provides the communities now with better access to schools and healthcare facilities, created short-term employment and income opportunities during construction, and supports community-based ecotourism and other sustainable livelihood activities.

Collectively, project interventions strengthened community ownership of conservation initiatives, enhanced local governance and collaboration with government agencies, improved the well-being and socio-economic resilience of forest-dependent communities, and established a strong foundation for the long-term conservation and sustainable management of the Upper Baram forest landscape.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

To ensure the project's sustainability, the EA will implement and facilitate activities as outlined in the Selaan-Tekiwit Conservation and Management Plan. In addition, the EA has secured funding under the CESS fund and Ecological Transfer fund to support community development in Upper Baram, which will be implemented in 2026–2027, including establishing community-based Conservation in Selaan–Selungo, upgrading of the gravity feed system at Long Selaan, and construction of a community hall at Ba Data Bila.

The project demonstrated that community ownership is fundamental to project success, and that conservation initiatives are more effective when linked to livelihood improvement.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received project completion report, technical reports and a satisfactory final financial audit, thus the Committee may wish to declare the project as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the project are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PP-A_60-367.

(7) PP-A/60-368 Strengthening the Resilience of Indigenous Mayan Communities in Tropical Forests of the Yucatan Peninsula through the Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in the Context of the Maya Train Project (Mexico)

Budget and Funding Sources:

Total Budget:			US$	337,097
ITTO Budget:			US$	227,097
Government of Japan:	US$	227,097		
Government of Mexico:			US$	110,000

Implementing Agency: NATIONAL SCHOOL OF HIGHER EDUCATION, MERIDA UNIT, NATIONAL AUTONOMOUS UNIVERSITY OF MEXICO

Starting Date and Duration: November 2024 / 12 months

Approved Revised Date of Project Completion: 31 December 2025 (NOL L25-0022)

I. Introduction

The project derived from concept note CN-22022 with an expression of interest from Japan's Emergency Supplementary Budget Programme in December 2023. The project agreement was duly signed in September 2024, and the first instalment of funds was done in November 2024, thus marking the commencement of the project.

The Yucatan Peninsula has a great biocultural wealth thanks to the diversity of its ecosystems and the heritage of the Mayan culture. However, the extent of tropical forests, their environmental services and the traditional knowledge associated with these ecosystems have all decreased due to recurrent land-use changes in the region, including the introduction of the Maya Train megaproject.

II. Project Objective

The project intended to raise awareness of traditional knowledge for the sustainable management and used of biodiversity while promoting local livelihoods.

III. Project Achievements and Outputs

All outputs were successfully achieved.

Under Output 1, "Research results have been published and made available to decision-makers", workshops to disseminate and validate project research with communities and authorities at local, regional and national level were completed. The first workshop focused on challenges and opportunities of tropical forests of the Yucatan peninsula, while the second reviewed sustainable economic ventures. Compilation of information on flora, fauna, and ecosystem services was carried out and one book, six infographics, six promotional materials and one interactive map containing such information as well as other factors (forest cover, deforestation, vegetation, natural protected areas, among others), were completed and are available from the project website (https://comunidadesymontesmayas.com). Such materials were presented and given to participating communities.

Under Output 2 "Target communities have been trained in strategies to strengthen their local economy", a diagnostic assessment of local enterprises was developed, including capacity building for four ventures and the development of business plans and a promotional video for each one. Additionally, the project supported the creation of two online shops for two community ventures (https://kuchilkaab.com and https://mielpat.com). As an additional output, capacity building on sustainable economic ventures was given to an additional group, the community of Kiní, upon their request.

Under Outputs 3, "The populations of target communities and cities have become more aware of the value and the importance of the conservation and sustainable use of forests and associated traditional knowledge", the illustrated publication *Where nature speaks Mayan* has been published in two language editions, Spanish/Mayan and English with 300 hardcopies printed for distribution to public libraries, schools and bookfairs, a softcopy is available for download at https://comunidadesymontesmayas.com/materiales. Eleven (11) video clips (one for each chapter the publication) for further dissemination and consumption by various audiences were produced in three language editions, Spanish, Mayan and English, and are available at the same link as provided above and from www.youtube.com/channel/UCCq5XEpbeeL-8fBlvr3j5pQ. Capturing the information gathered from field interviews, four posters were developed for four communities highlighting the sustainable use and conservation of their tropical forest resources. Three educational board games were developed in Spanish/Maya to facilitate knowledge assimilation on tropical forests, as well as four infographics on the cultural importance of Mayan language, fauna and key tree species were also developed. As part of awareness raising, the project developed its own visual identity which was widely used in all materials produced and events held under the project. Above material was disseminated with the participating forest communities and a video summarizing the project outputs have been produced. According to the completion report 3,500 people benefited from the dissemination material and events done during project implementation.

IV. Outcomes and Impacts

The project produced more than 80 deliverables, including publications, videos, videoclips, infographics, posters, board games, interacting maps, etc., available from the project website at https://comunidadesymontesmayas.com/. Depending on the nature of the material, it may be available in Spanish, Mayan, English or a combination of them.

The project promoted the sustainable use of forest resources through the strengthening of local enterprises and increasing awareness about the forest and associated traditional knowledge among residents

of target communities and cities, decision-makers and public policy makers. A key impact of the project is documenting and making available traditional knowledge of the Maya communities, which will serve for producing other research products into the future.

V. Lessons Learnt and sustainability

The project impacted on the livelihoods of four communities (beekeeping, meliponiculture and ecotourism), strengthening their local economy and the quality of life. It also impacted on the life of several students who joined the project team and worked on project activities. During project implementation, ten students graduated, in part, thanks to research conducted under the project.

The materials published in Mayan language are of especial relevance given the scarcity of publications in indigenous languages. These will continue to be used by the executing agency as part of their regular programme of work for the years to come. The project website will remain operational for continued dissemination.

VI. Concluding Remarks

The ITTO Secretariat has received project completion report, technical reports, promotional materials, and a satisfactory final financial audit, thus the Committee may wish to declare the project as duly completed. Reports and outreach products produced by the project, including a article published in TFU, are available from the project search tool on the ITTO website at www.itto.int/project/id/PP-A_60-368 and/or the project website https://comunidadesymontesmayas.com.

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