



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
TIMBER COUNCIL**

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FIFTY-FIFTH SESSION
2-7 December 2019
Lomé, Togo

**REPORT OF THE INFORMAL ADVISORY GROUP (IAG)
AT ITS THIRTY-THIRD MEETING**

**1 December 2019
Lomé, Togo**

**Thirty-third Meeting of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG)
Lomé, Togo, 1 December 2019**

Report of the Chairperson

1. The Thirty-third Meeting of the IAG was convened on Sunday, 1 December 2019, chaired by Mr. John Leigh (Peru), Chairperson of the Council. The meeting was attended by Mr. Björn Merzell (Sweden), Vice-chairperson of the Council, Dr. Jobst-Michael Schroeder (Germany), Chairperson of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF), Dr. Catherine Karr-Colque (U.S.A.), Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Economics, Statistics and Markets (CEM) and the Committee on Forest Industry (CFI), Mr. Jorge Malleux (Peru), Producer Spokesperson, Mr. Koffi Aoufo Dimizou (Togo), Representative of the Host Government of the Council Session, Mr. Tadashi Sato (Japan), Representative of the Host Government of the Headquarters, and Dr. Gerhard Dieterle, Executive Director, together with other senior members of the Secretariat.

The IAG was informed of the absence of Mr. Jorge Mario Rodriguez Zuniga (Costa Rica), Chairperson of the Committee on Finance and Administration (CFA), Mr. Mohd Kheiruddin Mohd Rani (Malaysia), Chairperson of the Committee on Forest Industry (CFI) and Ms. Anna Tyler (New Zealand), Consumer Spokesperson. In addition, Cameroon sent a letter on 20 November 2019 nominating Mr. Anicet Ngomin to replace Mr. Bruno Mfou'ou Mfou'ou, Chairperson of the (CEM) as he was unable to attend the Session. The CEM will be requested to elect Mr. Ngomin as its Chair at its first meeting of this Session.

The Chairperson opened the meeting and welcomed the members of the IAG.

In his welcoming remarks, Dr Dieterle thanked the Government of Togo, which had invested much effort, energy and money in hosting the Council Session. Dr Dieterle said he was hopeful that a quorum would be achieved at the Session, including through the delegation of votes.

2. The IAG considered and adopted the following agenda for discussion:
 - A. Brief background of the IAG:
 - Decision 2(LI);
 - Report of the IAG at its Thirty-second Meeting, 4 November 2018;
 - General observations by the IAG Members;
 - B. Opening of the Fifty-fifth Session of the Council
 - C. Status of the parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006
 - D. Filling positions of Council officers/bodies
 - E. Implementation of decisions dealing with the impairment of ITTO funds
 - F. Enhancing the Financing Architecture and Fundraising of the Organization – Decision 9(LIII) and Decision 5(LIV)
 - G. Matters related to the Appointment of the Executive Director – Decision 8(LII) and Decision 6(LIV)
 - H. Consideration of draft decisions/elements of decisions submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII)
 - Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LV)];
 - Administrative Budget for the 2020 and 2021 Financial Biennium;
 - Extension of the ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019;
 - Further Extension of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018;
 - Amendment of the Financial Rules of the ITTO;
 - ITTO Environmental and Social Management (EMS) Guidelines;
 - Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics.
 - I. List of possible decisions for the Fifty-fifth Session of the ITTC and report to the Council; and
 - J. Other matters
 - To be Decided.

A. Brief background of the IAG

3. In its deliberations, the IAG noted and made reference to Decision 2(LI) and the Report of the Informal Advisory Group (IAG) at its Thirty-second Meeting held on 4 November 2018 in Yokohama, Japan, as contained in document ITTC(LIV)/2 dated 4 November 2018.

B. Opening of the Fifty-fifth Session of the Council

4. The Secretariat introduced the proposed agenda for the opening of the Fifty-fifth Session of the ITTC, noting that there would be two segments, the first of which would feature an address by the President of the Republic of Togo, His Excellency Fore Gnassingbé Eyadéma. After the departure of His Excellency, the second part of the opening would include addresses by ministers from several countries, as well as by the Chairperson and the Executive Director. The Executive Director's address would also constitute agenda item 8.
5. The IAG discussed the protocols in place to ensure the smooth running of the opening. The Secretariat informed the IAG of measures taken to ensure quorum was achieved at this Session and possible steps to be taken if quorum was not achieved. To date, it appeared that the producers registered to attend the Session, plus those that had delegated their votes, met the criteria for a quorum on the producer side. On the consumer side, however, only 17 of the 37 members (not including the European Union—EU—which could not be counted for the purposes of achieving a quorum) were registered to attend or had delegated their votes, and the total required to achieve a quorum was 19. The Secretariat further clarified that the conditions for a quorum could be somewhat relaxed on the third day of the Session, in accordance with the International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA), 2006, but an additional two consumer members would still be required to attend with appropriate credentials or to delegate their votes to a member that was in attendance. The Producer Spokesperson reported that some producer members in Latin America had indicated to him their reasons for non-attendance, including budgetary constraints. They had also expressed their concern at the cost of participation and uncertainty about the benefits they would receive, such as in terms of financing of projects and pre-projects.

C. Status of the Parties to the International Tropical Timber Agreement, 2006

6. The IAG was informed on the current status of the parties to the ITTA, 2006. The Executive Director reported that there had been no change to the membership since the last meeting of the IAG. There are 74 parties to the Agreement, comprising 38 consumer members, including the EU, and 36 producer member countries. The Executive Director noted that he was in contact with two countries that had expressed interest in joining the Organization.

D. Filling Positions of Council Officers/Bodies

7. The IAG was informed of the non-attendance this year of the Consumer Spokesperson and the vacancy of the Chairperson of the Credentials Committee, for which the Consumer Caucus is expected to provide nominations immediately for the Council Session this year before the Credentials Committee meets for the first time on Tuesday, 3 December. The Secretariat reminded the meeting that the Chair of the CFA had indicated that he could not attend the Session. Given that the position of Vice-chair had been left vacant at the last Council Session, there was no official officeholder for this committee. Moreover, the eight members of the Credentials Committee needed to be nominated. The Chairperson requested that the producer and consumer groups nominate delegates to fill the various vacancies at the earliest opportunity at this Session.
8. The IAG was further informed of the need for nominations of Council officers for the Fifty-sixth Session of the ITTC. The Producer Caucus will need to provide nominations for the positions of Vice-Chairpersons of Council, CEM, CFI and CFA, while the Consumer Caucus needed to provide a nomination for the position of Vice-Chairperson of CRF.
9. The IAG discussed the need to fill several vacancies in the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals and confirm the third year of participation of experts from China, Finland and the Republic of Korea. The IAG also discussed the possible implications of proposed changes to the project cycle arising from the recommendations of Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies.

10. The Secretariat reminded the IAG that the Producer and Consumer caucuses would each need to nominate three members of the Fellowship Panel for 2020.

E. Implementation of Decisions Dealing with the Impairment of ITTO Funds

11. The IAG was briefed by the Secretariat on the latest developments. An appeal had been lodged with the Japanese court against an earlier decision that did not find in favour of the Organization, and the Secretariat had also instructed lawyers to issue third-party notices to three ex-members of the ITTO Secretariat. There would be a stay of proceedings on the appeal until these notices had been served and confirmed, and a judgement on the appeal would therefore be likely between July and November 2020, after which the need for further action could be determined.

F. Enhancing the Financing Architecture and Fundraising of the Organization – Decision 9(LIII) and Decision 5(LIV)

12. The IAG took note of the **Report of the ad hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies** and its recommendations, which will be presented to Council. The Producer Spokesperson informed the IAG that producers had submitted a number of observations on the draft report, on which consumer countries had made further observations, and these had been included in the report as an annex. The IAG was further informed that one of the co-chairs of the ad hoc Working Group would present the report to the Council at this Session.
13. The Executive Director said that this discussion would be crucial for the future of the Organization, and he hoped to receive guidance from the Council on how to move forward on designing a new financial architecture. He said he would present a non-paper explaining the main outcomes of the ad hoc Working Group and translating these into a new programmatic approach and new programme lines, as identified by the ad hoc Working Group. This non-paper would be available to all delegations in the Organization's three working languages. One option would be for the Council to decide to pilot this approach in the year to come as a way of providing information and guidance for the new Strategic Action Plan and Biennial Work Programme (BWP), as well as inputs for discussion on any renewal of the ITTA, 2006. The representative of Japan expressed the view that the approach of many donors had changed in recent years; it was important, therefore, for the Organization to also change its approach to align with this change.
14. The Producer Spokesperson said that producer members had found the results of the online survey conducted as part of the work of the ad hoc Working Group to have been very useful in explaining the Organization's funding decline and changes in donor priorities, and he suggested that a similar survey be conducted periodically. He also raised the issue of project proposals that had already been approved and were still pending financing. The Executive Director indicated that the non-paper provided a potential partial answer to this issue.
15. Concern was raised about the proposal to abolish the Expert Panel for the Appraisal of Project and Pre-project Proposals, which provided important quality control. The Executive Director responded that this had been the topic of considerable discussion during the ad hoc Working Group and needed further consideration.

G. Matters related to the Appointment of the Executive Director – Decision 8(LII) and Decision 6(LIV)

16. The Secretariat stated that, under Decision 8(LII), it was required to report on the end of term of the Executive Director at least one year in advance. The IAG noted that, in accordance with Decision 10(LII), the term of the current Executive Director would end on 31 March 2021; it further noted that the Executive Director had sent a letter to the Chair of Council and both spokespersons on 19 November 2019 seeking a second term. A discussion ensued on the order in which the elements of ITTC agenda item 15 would be addressed in the Council, and it was agreed that item 15 b) should be addressed first as a means to open discussion on 15 a). If time allowed, both sub-items could be discussed on Monday, but it would also be possible to return to the agenda item later in the week.
17. The Executive Director alerted the IAG to an error in a footnote in the report of the ad hoc Working Group on the Election of the Executive Director, which stated that staff rule 709 mandated that the extension of the Executive Director beyond the retirement age would be in 1-year increments and

would only be granted in exceptional circumstances. The Executive Director said, however, that this rule applied only to regular staff. He further referred to Decision 3(XXV), which specified the term of the Executive Director as four years with the possibility of extension of a further four years. He believed that the new rules, as outlined in Decision 6(LIV), were to apply to future Executive Directors and not to his appointment. The Producer Spokesperson said that, given the importance of this issue, more time might be required in the producer group meeting on Monday to discuss this and other matters.

18. The Chairperson summarized that the two proposals arising from these discussions were to recommend that 1) the order in which the two sub-items in agenda item 15 are discussed be reversed, with b) preceding a); and 2) the time allocated for the producer and consumer group meetings on Monday be extended from the current 90 minutes to 2 hours.

H. Consideration of Draft Decisions/Elements of Decisions Submitted Pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII)

19. The IAG considered the draft decisions/elements of decisions submitted pursuant to ITTC Decision 7(XXXIII) as follows:

- i. Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LV)];
- ii. Administrative Budget for the 2020 and 2021 Financial Biennium – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- iii. Extension of the ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019 – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- iv. Further Extension of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- v. Amendment of the Financial Rules of the ITTO – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- vi. ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- vii. Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics – *submitted by the Secretariat*.

20. The Secretariat provided background on the last two of these draft decisions. The Executive Director said that the decision on Environmental and Social Management Guidelines was important in the context of fundraising, because prospective donors would look first at the safeguards in place, especially for larger funding packages. The IAG discussed whether funding elements should be attached to the last two draft decisions. The Secretariat explained that this could be done during the Chairperson's Open-ended Drafting Group, or activities could be added to the BWP for funding. The Chairperson said it was easier to operationalize decisions by including funding in the decision itself, although there was doubt about whether such funding would be available at this Session.

21. The Chairperson noted that all seven draft decisions had been drafted by the Secretariat, with no members submitting any drafts. The possibility was raised of an additional decision on financing architecture, and the Secretariat summarized the procedure for doing so during the Session. It was decided to include a decision on financing architecture in the list of possible decisions.

I. List of Possible Decisions for the Fifty-fifth Session of the ITTC and Report to the Council

22. The IAG considered the possible list of decisions to be considered and adopted by the Council at its Fifty-fifth Session as follows:

- i. Projects, Pre-Projects and Activities [Decision 1(LV)];
- ii. Administrative Budget for the 2020 and 2021 Financial Biennium – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- iii. Extension of the ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019 – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- iv. Further Extension of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- v. Amendment of the Financial Rules of the ITTO – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- vi. ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines – *submitted by the Secretariat*;
- vii. Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics – *submitted by the Secretariat*.
- viii. Financing Architecture – *proposed by the IAG*.

These draft decisions (except for the first and last) are included in Annex A to this report.

J. Other Matters

Extension or renegotiation of the ITTA

23. The Secretariat informed the IAG that the ITTA, 2006 would expire in 2021, and the Council would therefore need to decide whether to extend the term of the Agreement, the provision for which was

included in the ITTA, 2006, or to commence a process to negotiate a new agreement. The latter course had considerable cost implications. The Secretariat further informed the IAG that it had prepared a factual non-paper setting out timelines for these options. The IAG requested the Secretariat to make this non-paper available to all delegations at this Council Session. It recommended that the issue be introduced under "Other Business" in the Council agenda, with the scheduling of this to be determined by the bureau later in the week.

K. Adjournment

24. The Thirty-third meeting of the IAG was adjourned at 1:09 p.m. with a vote of thanks to the Chairperson of the meeting.

ANNEX A

Draft Decisions

Only text of draft Decisions is appended to this Report.

The full text of the BWP 2018-2019 can be found in document ITTC(LIII)/15.



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DECISION ... (LV)

ADMINISTRATIVE BUDGET FOR THE 2020 AND 2021 FINANCIAL BIENNIUM

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling the Financial Rules and Rules Relating to Projects of the ITTO, Rule 3.3, which stipulates that Council shall approve and adopt the budget for the Administrative Account through a Council Decision;

Decides to:

1. Approve and adopt the Biennial Administrative Budget for the Financial Years 2020 and 2021 as contained in document CFA(XXXIV)/2 Rev.1, in the amount of US\$7,091,487 and US\$7,104,316, respectively.

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DECISION ... (LV)

EXTENSION OF THE ITTO BIENNIAL WORK PROGRAMME 2018-2019

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Appreciating the work of the Secretariat in implementing the Biennial Work Programme for the years 2018-2019;

Taking note of the recommendation of the ad hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies to extend the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 to the end of 2020 with a draft SAP based on new programmatic lines to be presented for adoption by Council in 2020;

Also taking note that the progress report on implementation of the BWP 2018-19 presented to the Fifty-fifth Session of the ITTC [Document ITTC(LV)/4] includes descriptions of work that may carry on into 2020 and possibly beyond in the Implementation Status updates provided for relevant approved activities;

Also taking note of the recommendation of the ad hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies that in the next negotiations of the BWP and the SAP, to structure the documents to more clearly show the connection between the different documents and the new streamlined ITTO funding infrastructure vision;

Further taking note of the recommendation of the Informal Advisory Group to extend the BWP 2018-2019;

Decides to:

1. Extend the Biennial Work Programme for 2018-2019, as contained in the Annex to this Decision, for a period of one year;
2. Urge all members to pay their assessed contributions in a timely manner and consider making additional resources available, be it through voluntary contributions or in kind resources to implement the Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019;
3. Request the Executive Director to seek additional funding sources to finance the continued implementation of the Biennial Work Programme;
4. Request the Executive Director to report on the progress in implementing the Biennial Work Programme to the Council during its Fifty-sixth Session;
5. Request the Executive Director to present a new Biennial Work Programme for consideration and approval to the Council during its Fifty-sixth Session.



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DECISION ... (LV)

FURTHER EXTENSION OF THE ITTO STRATEGIC ACTION PLAN 2013-2018

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Noting that the implementation period of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018, extended to 2019 would expire at the end of 2019;

Taking note of the recommendation of the ad hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies to extend the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 to the end of 2020 with a draft SAP based on new programmatic lines to be presented for adoption by Council in 2020;

Also taking note that funding for implementation of the 2018-2019 Biennial Work Programme activity to develop the next ITTO Strategic Action Plan has only been pledged during the last quarter of 2019 by the EU and the Government of Japan;

Also taking note of the recommendation of the ad hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies that in the next negotiations of the BWP and the SAP, the documents are structured to more clearly show the connection between the different documents and the new streamlined ITTO funding infrastructure vision;

Further taking note of the recommendation of the Informal Advisory Group to extend the SAP 2013-2018 extended to 2019, for one additional year until 2020;

Recognizing the objectives of ITTO as set out in Article 1 of the ITTA, 2006;

Decides to:

1. Extend the implementation period of the ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 extended to 2019, for one additional year through 2020;
2. Request the Executive Director to implement in a timely manner the 2018-2019 Biennial Work Programme activity to develop the next ITTO Strategic Action Plan for consideration and approval by Council at its Fifty-sixth Session in 2020.

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DECISION ... (LV) AMENDMENT OF THE FINANCIAL RULES OF THE ITTO

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling that at its Thirty-third Session, the Committee on Finance and Administration recommended to consider amending the financial rules to extend the audit term to match best practices in the market;

Further recalling that the ITTO Financial Rules requires the Secretariat to conduct a systems appraisal at least once every 3 years to assess the appropriateness of systems and the proper functioning of internal controls and to make improvements if necessary;

Noting the responsibilities of the Committee on Finance and Administration, documented in Decision 7(LII), to recommend to Council any modifications judged necessary to the Organization's Rules of Procedure, Staff Regulations and Rules or the Financial Rules and Rules Related to Projects;

Further noting that Rule 28 of the ITTO Financial Rules stipulates that amendments must be approved by the Council;

Decides to:

1. Amend the Financial Rules and Rules Relating to Projects of the ITTO and associated policies and procedures, as contained in document CFA(XXXIV)/7, with effect from 1 January 2020 or as soon as practical thereafter.

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DECISION ... (LV)

ITTO ENVIRONMENTAL AND SOCIAL MANAGEMENT (ESM) GUIDELINES

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling the “Guidelines for Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts Assessments in ITTO Projects” approved by the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management in 2016;

Also recalling the Committee’s recommendation in 2018 that the Guidelines be refined to address implementation problems revealed during the pilot phase, particularly regarding the cost and time involved in undertaking the assessment process;

Welcoming the comments on the draft “ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines” made before the current Session;

Noting document CRF(LIII)/5 containing final draft “ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines” which streamline the 2016 Guidelines in a user-friendly manner, clarify the risk assessment process, and reflect the ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women adopted in 2017;

Decides to:

1. Request the Executive Director to finalize the “ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines” taking into account Members’ written comments during the current Session, and to post the final Guidelines on the ITTO website in the three official languages by 31 January 2020;
2. Request Members to apply the assessment process set out in the Guidelines in formulating project proposals for ITTO consideration beginning with the next project cycle;
3. Request the Executive Director to assist Members, as requested, to apply the ESM assessment process;
4. Request the Executive Director to report on implementation of this Decision at the next Council Session.

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DECISION ... (LV)

GUIDELINES FOR FOREST LANDSCAPE RESTORATION IN THE TROPICS

The International Tropical Timber Council,

Recalling the ITTO Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests published in 2002 which represented the first international effort to provide overall guidance on tropical forest restoration;

Also recalling the ITTO Biennial Work Programme for 2018-2019 which called for the updating of the ITTO Guidelines for the Restoration, Management and Rehabilitation of Degraded and Secondary Tropical Forests to take into account global emerging issues and priorities;

Further recalling the report on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR): Analysis of ongoing FLR Programs of CPF Members and Revision of ITTO Restoration Guidelines [Document CRF (LII)/4];

Welcoming the draft Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics [Document CRF (LIII)/4] which have been developed in collaboration with CIFOR, FAO, IUCN, IUFRO, UN-Environment, WeForest and WRI under a joint initiative of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF) on Forest Landscape Restoration;

Also welcoming the comments on the draft Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics made before the current Session;

Decides to:

1. Request the Executive Director to finalize the draft Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in the Tropics [Document CRF (LIII)/4], taking into account the comments made before the current Session as well as Members' comments made during the current Session;
2. Request the Executive Director to prepare and publish the adopted FLR Guidelines and to distribute the publication widely to Members and other interested parties;
3. Request the Executive Director to undertake the following actions to promote the FLR Guidelines and their application by Members:
 - a. Publish a policy brief summarizing the FLR Guidelines ("Guidelines at a glance") in the three official languages of ITTO;
 - b. Encourage Members to apply the FLR Guidelines in the Tropics considering the national circumstances of Member countries and to submit project proposals to ITTO where appropriate;

4. Encourage Members, the private sector, local communities and stakeholders to use the FLR Guidelines in the Tropics as a reference and a contribution towards the restoration of degraded tropical forest landscapes;
5. Request the Executive Director to report on implementation of this Decision at the next Council Session.

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