



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL
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**COMMITTEE ON
REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**

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**REPORT TO THE INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL TIMBER COUNCIL FROM
THE FIFTY-THIRD SESSION OF THE COMMITTEE ON
REFORESTATION AND FOREST MANAGEMENT**

Item 1 - Opening of the Session

The Fifty-third Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF) was opened on 2 December 2019 by Dr. Jobst-Michael Schroeder (Germany), Chairperson of the CRF. The list of participants is presented in Document ITTC(LV)/Info.2.

Item 2 - Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work

The Provisional Agenda for the CRF, as contained in Document CRF(LIII)/1 Rev.1, was duly adopted. To expedite proceedings, the Agenda items 4 and 6 were considered at the Joint Session of the Committees convened on 3 and 4 December in order to ensure that all agenda items are covered within the limited time available to the Committee. The Chairperson of the CRF proposed to organize the Session in the following order: Item 3, Item 5, Item 7, Item 9, Item 10, Item 8, Item 11, Item 12, Item 13, Item 14 and Item 15.

Item 3 - Admission of Observers

The Committee admitted the Observers listed in Document ITTC(LV)/Info.3 Rev.1, as approved by the Council.

Item 4 - ITTO Annual Market Discussion - 2019

The Committees noted the summary of the ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2019, held in the Joint Session of All Committees as part of the Trade and Markets Day on 3 December 2019, as contained in Appendix A of Document CEM-CFI(LIII)/4. The theme of the Market Discussion was “Added Value Processing in Africa - The Opportunities and Challenges”. Mr. Barney Chan (TAG Co-coordinator) chaired the Market Discussion.

The following feature presentations were made during the Market Discussion (available at <http://www.itto.int/ittc-55/presentations>):

Mr. Pyoabalo Alaba, Forest and Water Engineer Director General, ODEF	<i>Forestry and wood processing in Togo – challenges and opportunities</i>
Mr. Ayite Gaba, Co-founder and President Togo Timber S.A.	<i>Value chains from smallholders’ teak plantations in Togo</i>
Ms. Fifonsi Ayélé Dangbo University of Lomé, Togo	<i>Recommendations of the ITTO Regional Workshop on Smallholders Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in West Africa</i>
Dr. Labode Popoola, President, West African Research and Innovation Management Association Pioneer Director, Centre for Sustainable Development, University of Ibadan, Nigeria	<i>The dynamics of intra-Africa wood trade markets and implications for sustainable development</i>
Mr. Roy Southey, Executive Director, Sawmilling SA	<i>Wood processing in South Africa – success and setbacks</i>
Mr. Rik Sools, Managing Director, Form International	<i>Industrial forestry plantations in Africa and their importance for developing timber industries – the case of Form Ghana</i>
Mr. Mafa Chipeta, Retired FAO sub-regional coordinator for Eastern Africa and representative to the African Union, the UN Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) and Ethiopia	<i>Dreams to industrialize – how can Africa achieve its long-postponed ambitions?</i>

The Committee further noted the statement of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) presented during the Market Discussion as contained in Appendix B of Document CEM-CFI(LIII)/4.

Item 5 - Policy Work

The Committee considered the progress in the implementation of the following policy-related matters:

(i) Promotion of Smallholders' Forest Landscape Restoration in West Africa [ITTO Programme on Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains (LSSC) Activity #3]

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Activity, which is funded by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) of the Government of Germany, as follows:

- This Policy Activity intends to provide strategic advice in promoting incentive-based policies and enabling conditions for smallholders' forest landscape restoration (FLR) management systems in West Africa through a comprehensive analysis on the promotion of smallholders' FLR in six ITTO producer member countries (Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Ghana, Mali and Togo) in West Africa.
- Six country case studies have been carried out by national consultants under the leadership of the international consultant, Professor Jürgen Blaser, School of Agricultural, Forestry and Food Sciences (HAFL), Bern University of Applied Sciences. These six country case studies have been dealing with the current situation of smallholders' plantations in West Africa in terms of land tenure, silvicultural competence, pre-financing of forest investments, purchase agreements of marketable products, value chain development as well as actions taken on policies and institutional arrangements. The lead consultant and his team have been collecting FLR policies and successful FLR case stories in six ITTO member countries in West Africa in order to draw lessons on the ways and means for unleashing the potential and prospects for accelerating the development of collaborative smallholders' plantation systems in West Africa.
- A regional workshop on sustainable development of smallholder FLR plantations in West Africa was held on 27 - 29 November 2019, in Lomé, Togo prior to the ITTC 55. It was attended by 45 participants from all 16 ITTO members countries, including all 13 ITTO member countries in Africa. The Office de Développement et d'Exploitation des Forêts (ODEF) was in charge of logistical aspects of this regional workshop. The main outcomes of this regional workshop were shared with delegates and participants at the 55th ITTC Session, during the ITTO Trade and Market Day on Tuesday 3 December 2019, by Ms. Fifonsi Ayélé DANGBO and Mr. Ayité GABA.

The Committee took note of the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Activity under the collaborative partnership between HAFL, ODEF and the ITTO Secretariat.

(ii) Development of training curricula for Central African countries on Legal and Sustainable supply Chains (LSSC) [ITTO Programme on Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains (LSSC) Activity #5]

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Activity, which is funded by the Ministry of Food and Agriculture (BMEL) of the Government of Germany, as follows:

- This Policy Activity aims to contribute to building capacity on legal and sustainable supply chains (LSSC) for professionals and technicians in Congo Basin countries in order to allow them to understand the concept of LSSC through the utilization of the following training modules:
 - Module 1: Understanding deforestation-free
 - Module 2: Assessing legality and achieving accountability
 - Module 3: From legality to sustainability
 - Module 4: Markets and access to markets
- Identifying and surveying relevant stakeholders to be involved in the sensitization campaigns on legal and sustainable supply chains (LSSC): the survey was undertaken in five countries in the Congo Basin (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon) by the RIFFEAC Secretariat in collaboration with four consultants selected for the formulation of the abovementioned training curricula, through the circulation of the e-version of a questionnaire on LSSC-related issues to relevant stakeholders. The data and information collected through the survey are under review;
- The four regional consultants prepared a draft document regarding the methodology to be used for preparation of the training modules which were discussed during the abovementioned Inception Regional Workshop in order to enrich the inputs and offer amendments suggested by representatives of stakeholders; and

- The regional workshop dealing with the sensitization and awareness on legal and sustainable supply chains (LSSC), in relation to forest governance in Congo Basin countries, was held on 14-15 October 2019, in Douala (Cameroon). It was attended by participants representing relevant forestry-related stakeholders (government institutions, private sector associations/unions, forestry training institutions, forestry/environment-related civil society organizations, etc.) from five ITTO member countries in Congo Basin (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Gabon and Republic Congo).

The Committee took note of the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Activity which is at in its earlier implementation period.

**(iii) Update the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration
[Activity 10 (b), ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019]**

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Activity as follows:

- Under a Joint Initiative on Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) of the Collaborative Partnership on Forest (CPF), ITTO undertook an analysis of the ongoing FLR programmes of CPF members in 2018. This analysis was facilitated by the engagement of two international consultants: Prof. Jürgen Blaser (Switzerland) and Dr. Cesar Sabogal (Peru);
- At its 52nd Session (5-9 November 2018, Yokohama), the Committee received a report on the analysis of CPF members FLR programmes and a background paper for setting new ITTO guidelines for tropical forest landscapes prepared by the two consultants;
- The first FLR Expert Group Meeting was held in mid-November 2018 in Bangkok, Thailand with financial support of AFoCO and the Korean government reviewed the outlines of the new FLR guidelines with input from restoration experts from member countries, international and regional organizations and civil-society organizations. In June 2019, a second FLR Expert Group Meeting was held in Lüderenalp, Switzerland with the financial assistance of the Swiss Development Cooperation, AFoCO and the Korean government. This meeting reviewed the draft guiding elements and implementation guide described in the first draft FLR guidelines; and
- Based on the comments of the FLR Expert Group Meeting in Lüderenalp, the two consultants revised the first draft FLR guidelines. The Executive Director circulated the draft FLR Guidelines to Members on 30 September, inviting comments by 22 November. The draft "Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics" were posted on the ITTO website in late October. The Secretariat received several responses from governments, CPF members and FLR experts.

The consultant, Prof Jürgen Blaser made a presentation on the draft Guidelines for FLR in the Tropics and highlighted the following points:

- Attention to landscape restoration is growing globally. 16 international organizations, including 11 CPF members have major programmes and projects on (forest) landscape restoration while 8 major FLR guidelines have been developed;
- The draft Guidelines for FLR in the Tropics aim at building sustainable forest landscapes in the tropics. The main purpose of these Guidelines is to provide a knowledge base for tropical forest landscape restoration focusing on forest-/tree-based land use systems as well as a guide for planning and implementing restoration and management practices at the site (local) and landscape level;
- The draft Guidelines are organized into five sections: (1) Background (reviewing existing guidelines and tools), (2) Principles and guiding elements for the restoration of tropical forest landscapes, (3) Implementation processes and operational guidance, (4) Case studies on tropical forest landscape restoration, and (5) The way forward;
- A total of 32 guiding elements are presented to further describe the six internationally recognized principles of FLR in 2018. The six FLR principles include (1) Focus on landscapes, (2) Engage stakeholders and support participatory governance, (3) Restore multiple functions for multiple benefits, (4) Maintain and enhance natural forest ecosystems within landscapes, (5) Tailor to the local context using a variety of approaches, and (6) Manage adaptively for long-term resilience; and
- For each guiding element, FLR interventions are structured according to project phases (visioning, conceptualizing, acting, and sustaining). 17 case studies have been selected to share concrete experiences restoring degraded tropical forests and forest lands with landscape approach and to show evidence supporting the replicability and sustainability of FLR experience.

Following the presentation of Prof Jürgen Blaser, the Delegation of Republic of Korea welcomed the development of new FLR guidelines under the CPF's Joint Initiative on FLR in line with the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030. She looked forward to her Government's continued support for the implementation of this Activity to enhance the restoration of degraded forest landscapes. The Delegation of Benin also supported the development of the new FLR guidelines but asked if a French version of the draft FLR guidelines is available. The Delegation of Germany commended the consultant, Prof. J Blaser for his comprehensive report and presentation. He questioned whether the six FLR principles in 2018 are applicable to all types of forests. The Delegation of the United States also commended the consultant for his excellent presentation and highlighted the importance of new FLR guidelines. Regarding the six FLR principles, she suggested referring to them as internationally recognized principles rather than internationally agreed principles. In addition, she advised the finalization of the draft FLR Guidelines incorporating the comments submitted by members.

A consultation meeting was held on 3 December to review the draft FLR guidelines. The Delegation of the United States reported the key outcomes of this meeting to the Committee providing substantive advice for further refinements of the draft FLR guidelines. She noted that the draft FLR guidelines are ready for finalization after their long development process which included two FLR expert group meetings in Thailand and Switzerland with participation of CPF members. Recognizing the French and Spanish versions of the draft FLR guidelines are not available to Members, she encouraged extending the deadline for receiving comments from Members on the draft FLR guidelines. The Delegation of Côte d'Ivoire commented on the importance of financing FLR activities under the new mechanism of Programmatic Lines to enhance ITTO's financing architecture and fundraising approach.

The Committee commended the two consultants for their excellent work in formulating the draft FLR guidelines to advance the effective design and implementation of FLR strategies and actions on the ground. In light of the importance of finalizing the draft FLR guidelines, the Committee recommended that the draft "Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in the Tropics" [Document CRF(LIII)/4] should be revised, taking into account Members comments submitted to the Secretariat by 15 January 2020. The Committee also recommended that the final draft FLR Guidelines should be made available on the ITTO website from 1 March to 20 March 2020, in all three working languages of ITTO, for the adoption of these guidelines through an electronic non-objection procedure. The Committee also encouraged that Members, the private sector, local communities and other stakeholders apply the adopted FLR Guidelines in the Tropics, where appropriate, as a contribution towards the restoration of degraded tropical forest landscapes

**(iv) Prevention and management of fire in tropical timber-producing forests
[Activity 12, ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019]**

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Activity as follows:

- The main objective of this activity is to enhance synergies between ITTO forest fire projects and global fire management efforts. More specifically this activity intends to provide the platform to assist participation of ITTO forest fire related project experts in international fire conferences in order to promote exchange of opportunities among professionals related to fire management and forest fire control.
- ITTO assisted the participation of five forest fire experts in the 7th International Wildland Fire Conference (IWFC) held in October 2019 in Campo Grande, Brazil under the theme "Facing fire in a changing world: reducing vulnerability of people and landscapes by integrated fire management". This conference was organized by the Brazilian Institute of Environment and Renewable Natural Resources (IBAMA) and it was attended by more than 1000 participants including government officials, scientists, and professionals from civil society from 37 countries and international organizations.
- Participants at the conference discussed challenging fire regimes in a changing world as well as the strengthening of policy-science-practitioner interface to contribute to the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030. A conference statement highlighted the need to promote integrated actions on fire management, multi-sectoral planning approaches that recognise the inclusion of traditional and indigenous knowledge as well as gender balance and local based solutions to ensure the resilience of landscape to wildfires. Continued international cooperation in fire management was also highlighted as the means for effective cross border fire management.
- The ITTO sponsorship for the five fire experts from Ghana, Indonesia, Panama, Peru and Vietnam offered an excellent opportunity to network with scientists and practitioners from other regions and to develop further cooperation in fire management in the region.

- The ITTO Secretariat has continued its close collaboration with global forest fire institutes including the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) and the Global Fire Monitoring Center. ITTO developed the Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests in 1997 after the extended fire in S.E. Asia during the El Niño of 1982-83. In terms of capacity building to implement challenges in fire management, ITTO has supported many projects and made an Ex-Post Evaluation of the Thematic Group on Forest Fire covering 11 Projects in 2015.
- As such, the Secretariat is looking forward to continue supporting fire management capacities in Producer Member Countries through strengthening partnerships to develop and implement integrated fire management strategies. In the context of the extended BWP 2018-2019, the Secretariat looks forward to providing its support to Member Countries in training and extension of local communities for prevention and suppression of forest fires and improvement of early warning systems.

The Committee took note of the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Activity and looked forward to continued discussion at its next session.

(v) Amendment of “Guidelines for Environmental and Social Risks and Input Assessment (ESIA) in ITTO projects”

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Activity as follows:

- This activity was to amend the “2016 Guidelines for Environmental and Social Risks and Impacts Assessments in ITTO Projects” based on the recommendation of the 52nd Session of the CRF in 2018 which highlighted the need to address implementation problems revealed in the pilot phase, particularly regarding the time and costs associated with carrying out the assessment process.
- In response to this guidance, the Secretariat engaged 2 consultants: Ms. Stephanie Caswell (USA) and Dr. Hiras Sidabutar (Indonesia) to streamline the 2016 Guidelines to address the implementation problems in a user friendly format and to take into account the Gender Guidelines approved in Lima, as well as the environmental and social (ES) management processes used by FAO and IUCN.
- The consultants developed the draft revised “ITTO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines” addressing the implementation problems. The ITTO Executive Director circulated the draft Guidelines to Members on 11 September, inviting comments by 1 October. As of mid-October, the Secretariat had received responses from 3 countries: Guyana, Mexico and the USA. The consultants revised the draft based on these comments, and the final draft Environment and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines were posted on the ITTO website in late October.
- In the risk assessment there are three risk categories. These are Category A for potentially high risk project proposals, Category B for medium risk proposals and Category C for low or no risk proposals. There are 3 levels of assessment possible which correspond to risk categories A, B and C:
 - For low risk proposals, a proponent conducts an “ES Review” consistent with guidance contained in the Project Formulation Manual.
 - For medium risk proposals, a proponent conducts an “ES Analysis” which is described in Annex 3 of the Guidelines.
 - High risk proposals require an “ES Impact Assessment” which is more comprehensive than an ES Analysis. While an ES Impact Assessment may be prepared internally, it would be advisable for credibility to engage an independent consultant to undertake the assessment.
- The Secretariat will reinforce its role in environment and social assessments of all project proposals even under a streamlined project cycle promoting project concept notes and co-development of proposals as the core of the ESM guidelines remain same. As such, the Secretariat looks forward to the adoption of the final draft ESM guidelines by the Council.

The Delegation of Japan commented on the importance of finalizing the draft ESM guidelines in project work. He also noted that these ESM guidelines would be important to the ITTO accreditation proposal to the Green Climate Fund (GCF). He sought clarification on the type of Category B proposals. The Secretariat indicated that a list of indicative types of project proposals by risk categories including Category B proposals is provided in the draft ESM guidelines. The Delegation of the United States highlighted the value of ESM guidelines in ITTO's project work and future partnerships. She also noted that the ESM guidelines will be implemented as a living document and updating will be made in accordance with the development of a new project cycle. She further recommended to wait on a professional printing of the guidelines and use an electronic copy for the time being.

The Committee commended the two consultants for their excellent work in formulating the final draft ESM guidelines incorporating the recommendations of the 52nd Session of the CRF as well as the comments made by Members. The Committee recommended the adoption of the final draft “ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines” by Council. The Committee also recommended that the assessment process set out in the adopted “ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines” should be applied in formulating future project proposals.

(vi) Joint ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity [Decision 6(XLVI)]

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of the CBD-ITTO Joint Initiative as follows:

- This policy activity has not been included as an agenda item of the Council, for the last two ITTC Sessions, because no funds were provided for new projects or pre-projects by donors;
- It was recalled that under the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative, 12 projects had been funded and implemented in the three tropical regions, for a total of over USD 15 million. Most projects are currently either completed or near completion. The CBD-ITTO Joint Initiative has been visibly contributing towards the achievement of the CBD Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, in particular, the forest-related Aichi Biodiversity Targets 5, 7, 11 and 15.

During the discussion, the Delegation of Germany recommended the ITTO Secretariat to interact with the CBD Secretariat, for the renewal of the memorandum of understanding (MoU) signed between the Secretariats of both organizations, to enhance biodiversity conservation in production tropical forests, and to improve the conservation and management of protected areas for sustainable livelihoods of local communities and indigenous groups. He noted that there is an increasing need to enhance collaborative partnerships between CBD and ITTO under the new CBD post-2020 global biodiversity framework.

(vii) Enhancing Conservation and Sustainable Management of Teak Forests and Legal and Sustainable Wood Supply Chains in the Greater Mekong Sub-region

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this Activity as follows:

- Under the ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2018-2019, the activity “Enhancing teak Management” aims to promote a regional approach for enhancing the contribution of sustainable teak management to the protection of tropical forests in participating countries, as well as promoting legal and sustainable teak industry and trade.
- In 2018, the proposal entitled ‘Enhancing Conservation and Sustainable Management of Teak Forests and Legal and Sustainable Wood Supply Chains in the Greater Mekong Subregion’ was formulated and it was financed by the Federal Ministry of Food and Agriculture of Germany (BMEL).
- Since last March, many national and regional activities have been taken place. A regional workshop for sustaining teak forests was held in Yangon, Myanmar on 27-29 September 2019 in collaboration with the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO) and the Forest Department of Myanmar. For the sustainable development of the teak-based forest sector in the Mekong region, the workshop participants made the following recommendations:
 - Enhance the in-situ and ex-situ conservation of teak genetic resources through the establishment of seed production areas and seed orchards for supplying high-quality seed for teak plantations and joint research on the conservation of teak genetic resources linked with breeding and biotechnology.
 - Improve silvicultural aspects of teak plantations, from the selection of suitable sites to thinning and harvesting techniques. There is a strong need to share knowledge and experiences in the sustainable management of teak plantations.
 - Promote the engagement of smallholders and communities, including young people and women, in natural teak forest management and the establishment of planted teak by supporting the supply of high-quality teak seedlings and extension services to smallholders and encouraging capacity building, networking and partnerships.
 - Promote sustainable value chains for teak timber and timber products through value-added product development, appropriate incentive mechanisms for smallholder plantations, improved marketing and greater access to finance and long-term investment

Following the presentation by the Secretariat, the Delegation of Japan noted the importance of

sustainable teak forest management in the Mekong region. He pointed out Japan's previous support to the implementation of a teak project "Ex-Situ and In-Situ Conservation of Teak to Support Sustainable Forest Management in Myanmar" and looked forward to increasing teak genetic resources improvement cooperation with relevant research institutes, including the Forest Tree Breeding Centre in Japan.

The Delegation of Germany acknowledged the presentation by the Secretariat and the implementation of this activity with engagement of many partners enhancing cross border cooperation. He enquired on the opportunity for cooperation between this activity in teak genetic resource exchange with Togo and Ghana in West Africa. He also drew the attention of the Committee to the value of mapping high quality teak plantation areas globally.

In response, the Secretariat informed the Committee that regional cooperation on teak between the Mekong and West African regions will be facilitated by the World Teak Conference (August 2020, Accra, Ghana) which is being jointly organized with ITTO. He also indicated that future work under this activity will review the feasibility of mapping high quality teak plantation areas to promote high quality teak products produced in a longer rotation cycle (e.g. 40 years). The Delegation of Indonesia expressed its willingness to share Indonesian experience in promoting high quality teak plantations and looked forward to quality teak products trade development.

Item 6 - Report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals

The Joint Session of All Committees considered the report of the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals presented by Dr. Jobst-Michael Schroeder (Germany), as contained in Document ITTC/EP-54. In its general findings and recommendations, as derived from the appraisal of 30 proposals (25 projects and 5 pre-projects), the Fifty-fourth Panel noted that:

- Twelve (12) proposals including 2 pre-projects and 10 project proposals (40 percent of the total) were commended to the Committees for final appraisal with minor modifications required (Category 1);
- Twelve (12) proposals including 2 pre-projects and 10 project proposals (40 percent of the total) were sent back to proponents for essential revisions, rated as Category 2; and
- Six (6) proposals including 1 pre-project and 5 project proposals (20 percent of the total) received a category 4, indicating that the Expert Panel does not commend these to the Committee for approval as they require complete reformulation.

A high share of projects was related to Reforestation and Forest Management (RFM). Out of the 30 proposals reviewed only 3 were categorized under Forest Industry (10%), 3 were categorized under Economics, Statistics and Markets (10%) and 24 were categorized under Reforestation and Forest Management (80%). One previously approved but sunset project proposal was resubmitted as a new proposal to the Expert Panel. As this was assessed as Category 1 by the previous Panel, this Panel rated it Category 1 in order to be consistent with the previous evaluation.

The presentation also highlighted that only one proposal focused specifically on gender issues. Additionally two proposals incorporated strong components on gender issues. Although the Panel noticed that more proposals included gender aspects/activities, there is still room for further integrate gender according to the ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (GEEW). Numerous proposals did not fully follow the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation (Third Edition, 2009). There were inconsistencies with the contents and lengths of various sections and maximum total lengths of the proposals. Many proposals did not follow the correct formulation of budget tables.

Item 7 - New Projects and Pre-projects

The Committee noted the projects and pre-projects that were approved under the time-bound electronic no objection procedures to accept the Expert Panel's ratings and circulated to member countries pursuant to Decision 6(XLIII), as contained in Document ITTC/EP-54, following the recommendations of the Expert Panel at its Fifty-fourth Meeting held in Yokohama, Japan from 24-28 June 2019, as follows:

Fifty-fourth Expert Panel

Category 1:

PD/PPD NUMBER	TITLE	SUBMITTING COUNTRY
PD 808/16 Rev.3 (F)	Conservation of African Barwood (<i>Pterocarpus Erinaceus Poir</i>) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities	Côte d'Ivoire
PD 818/16 Rev.3 (F)	"BOSS - CUSHABATAY" Project – Forest Management and Restoration in the Cushabatay Basin on the Eastern Slope of the Cordillera Azul National Park (PNCAZ), Peru	Peru
PD 852/17 Rev.3 (F)	Development of a Regional Strategy for the Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Areas on the South Coast of Peru	Peru
PD 877/18 Rev.2 (F)	Taper and Commercial Volume Systems for the Planning of the Sustainable Management of Ten Tropical Forest Species in Quintana Roo, Mexico	Mexico
PD 890/18 Rev.2 (F)	Rehabilitation of the Upper Bandama Gazetted Forest in the North of Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of the Local People	Côte d'Ivoire
PD 894/19 Rev.1 (F)	Strengthening of Community Forest Management in Peru	Peru
PD 895/19 Rev.1 (F)	Strengthening the Participation of Women in Rural Communities for the Development of Ecotourism Service Enterprises and Sustainable Business Models on the Coast of Veracruz, Mexico	Mexico
PD 905/19 Rev.1 (F)	Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo	Togo
PPD 196/19 Rev.1 (F)	Support for Operational and Planning Capacity-building for Stakeholders in the Private and Community Forestry Sector in Togo	Togo

Category 4:

PD/PPD NUMBER	TITLE	SUBMITTING COUNTRY
PD 859/17 Rev.2 (F)	Establishment of a Collaborative Framework through the Creation of a Local Joint Management Body for the Haho-Baloé Reserved Forest in Togo	Togo
PD 864/17 Rev.2 (F)	Forest Restoration to Reduce the Vulnerability of Rural Communities to Climate Change in Five Municipalities of Las Verapaces	Guatemala
PD 880/18 Rev.1 (F)	Demonstrate the Development of Relationships Between Tree Growth and Climate Variability and Topographical Factors in Thailand's Natural Forests to Support Sustainable Forest Management in Thailand: Phase I	Thailand
PD 899/19 (F)	Accelerating effective integrated management of newly constructed Peat Hydrology Unit (PHU) in Kalimantan	Indonesia
PPD 194/19 (F)	Strengthening Sustainable Forest Management in ACTO Member Countries (ACTO-MC) through the Application and Use of Harmonized ACTO/ITTO C&I and the Generation of Reliable and Useful Information for Technical Decision-Makers and Forest Policy-Makers	Peru

The Committee took note that the Fifty-fifth and Fifty-sixth Meetings of the Expert Panel are tentatively scheduled for 3-7 February 2020 and 22-26 June 2020, respectively based on Document ITTC(LV)/Info.6 - Project Cycle Calendar for Spring 2020 and Document ITTC(LV)/Info.7 - Project Cycle Calendar for Autumn 2020.

Item 8 - Report on Completed Projects and Pre-projects

The Committee considered the completed project contained in Document CRF(LIII)/2 and noted that seven projects are to be declared complete by the Council.

8.1 Completed Projects

- 1) **PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F) Building the Capacities of Forestry Training Institutions Members of the Network of Central African Forestry and Environmental Training Institutions (RIFFEAC) for Providing SFM Training for Forest Concessions**
“Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Tropical Rainforests and Biodiversity Conservation in the ITTO Congo Basin Countries” (Regional)

The Committee took note that the implementation of this project had contributed to gradually building human resource capacity required to achieve sustainable forest ecosystem management in the Congo Basin, in order to ensure that they are capable to train the personnel able to implement sustainable forest management in Congo Basin countries. For that purpose, reference training modules/programmes and associated teaching methodologies (at university level and at lower level) were prepared and finalized by the University of Laval and CERFOR Technical Forestry Centre of Canada in consultation with all RIFFEAC training institutions, directly or indirectly involved and/or linked to the project implementation, as well as with other forestry-related public and private institutions operating Congo Basin countries.

The Delegation of Japan expressed the appreciation for the successful implementation of this project, after two extensions of the project implementation period, until March 2019. He expressed the wish that the beneficiaries training institutions will continue to efficiently use the main project outcomes. He informed the Committee that the project coordinator, Professor Claude KACHAKA, made an interesting presentation at the Seventh Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD-7), held in Yokohama (Japan), in August 2019, for sharing the project achievements.

The Delegation of the United States commended the collaboration between CBD and ITTO in the implementation of this regional project dealing with ITTO member countries in Congo Basin, under the memorandum of understanding governing the CBD-ITTO Joint Initiative.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 456/07 Rev.4 (F) as completed.

- 2) **PD 470/07 Rev.1 (F) Development and Implementation of Criteria and Indicators for Sustainable Management of Planted Forests and Community Forests (Thailand)**

The Committee took note that this project has been implemented by the Royal Forest Department of Thailand. The project aimed to establish a comprehensive system of criteria and indicators for sustainable management of planted forests and community forests in order to contribute to the improved availability of timber and non-timber forest products from sustainable and legal sources in Thailand.

The Delegation of Thailand made a presentation on the main achievements of the project. He highlighted the development of Thai Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for sustainable management of planted forests and community forests and Thai Chain of Custody (CoC) certification through the intensive work of National Working Group and its sub-groups in consultation with relevant stakeholders. The 7 Criteria of Thai C&I are: compliance with law, policy and related measures; proportion and condition of forest areas; condition and adaptation of forest ecosystems; forest products and ecosystem services; forest biodiversity; soil and water conservation, and; economic, social and cultural aspects of local community. Regarding the publications produced by the project, he pointed out they include a manual of C&I and COC; info Graphic on SFM and C&I in managing forest plantations and community forests. He appreciated the Government of Japan for financing the project which has contributed to the advancement of Thai C&I for SFM.

The Delegation of Japan welcomed for the successful completion of the project despite various difficult situations in the country during project implementation. He encouraged the wider application of the Thai C&I for sustainable management of planted forests and community forests.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 470/07 Rev.1 (F) as completed.

3) PD 477/07 Rev.4 (F) Improving Forest Functions in Bengkulu Province through Community Participation in Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest by Using Local Prospective Commodities (Indonesia)

The Committee noted that the project has been implemented by the Department of Watershed Control and Forest Protection, Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia to rehabilitate and restore degraded forests in Bengkulu Province, Sumatra, Indonesia. Specifically, the project was to improve livelihoods of local communities through their involvement in the plantation of locally adapted and prospective timber species. The project has identified seed sources for two indigenous species (Kayu Bawang and Bentara Durian) and developed propagation and plantation techniques for these species with preparation of technical guidelines. Overall, the project has contributed to implementing suitable technology for the production of high quality planting materials of locally adapted valuable indigenous species with improved stakeholders' involvement.

The Delegation of Japan welcomed the successful completion of this project and acknowledged the local government's commitment to the sustainability of the project. He encouraged the wider dissemination of project results, including technical manuals, to interested parties. The Delegation of Indonesia thanked the donor, Japan for financing the project and confirmed that project outcomes leading to improved livelihoods of the local communities would be extended to similar projects in the country to increase the impact of the project.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Report(s) and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 477/07 Rev.4 (F) as completed.

4) PD 563/09 Rev.5 (F) Community Based Forest Management of Sungai Medihit Watershed (Malaysia)

The Committee took note that the project was financed by the Asia-Pacific Network for Sustainable Forest Management and Rehabilitation (APFNet) under the MoU between ITTO and APFNet on promotion of sustainable forest management. The project has been implemented by Forest Department of Sarawak and it has promoted sustainable forest management in Sungai Medehit Watershed, Sarawak, Malaysia through community capacity building and collaborative governance mechanisms on community development. Sungai Medihit catchment is located in Ulu Limbang Division, north Sarawak in a remote and hilly 35,400 ha area where the Kelabit and Penan indigenous communities subsist on shifting agriculture and resources collected from increasingly disturbed forests. Two community forest management plans have been developed and demonstration activities on SFM have been carried out with establishment of a community-based forest management platform. During the implementation of the project, alternative livelihood activities have been emphasized. These include fish raising, poultry raising, vegetable cropping and home stay for eco-tourism.

The Delegation of Malaysia thanked ITTO and APFNet for financing the project in Sarawak and confirmed the sustainability of the project through the on-going programmes of Forest Department of Sarawak.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 563/09 Rev.5 (F) as completed.

5) PD 601/11 Rev.3 (F) Strengthening Mangrove Ecosystem Conservation in the Biosphere Reserve of Northwestern Peru (Peru)

The Committee took note that the project implementation contributed to improve the standard of living of the population in mangrove ecosystem areas in the regions of Tumbes and Piura, by increasing the number of participatory mechanisms for mangrove forest protection, conservation and rehabilitation in the regions of Tumbes and Piura. It was done through the following strategies: (1) using adequately the legal powers by regional and local governments for the conservation of mangrove forests; (2) improving the level of forest administration and management so as to preserve mangrove ecosystems; and (3) developing and implementing financial sustainability strategies for mangrove forests.

The Delegation of Peru expressed gratitude to the governments of Japan and United States and informed the Committee that the sustainability of the main project outcomes will be enhanced for the recovery and conservation of mangrove ecosystems which have been under the pressure of activities of other economic sectors in the surrounding areas. The Delegation of Japan commended the successful implementation of this project, after one extension of the project implementation period, until November 2017, which could continue to provide income to local communities living in the project target areas. The Delegation of the United States thanked Peru and the ITTO Secretariat for the comprehensive report regarding the main achievements of this project linked to a strong community component dealing with livelihood for local communities.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Report(s) and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 601/11 Rev.3 (F) as completed.

6) PD 602/11 Rev.3 (F) Tropical Forest Governance in the Region of Darien, Panama (Panama)

The Committee took note that the project's primary objective was to support the implementation of the national Strategy for Illegal Logging Prevention and Control developed through the previous project, in order to deal with the out of control problem of illegal logging in Darien, Panama.

The Delegation of Japan commended the successful implementation of this project, after two extensions of the project implementation period, until July 2018. He expressed the wish that the beneficiary country, Panama, will be able to ensure the sustainability of the main project outcomes which could continue to contribute to forestry governance. The Delegation of the United States encouraged Panama to continue using the tools developed with implementation of this project, traceability and chain-of-custody systems, for the improvement of forest governance at all levels in Panama.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Report(s) and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 602/11 Rev.3 (F) as completed.

7) PD 710/13 Rev.1 (F) Promoting Conservation of Selected High-value Indigenous Species of Sumatra (Indonesia)

The Committee took note that the project has been implemented by Forest Research Institute in Kuok, Riau Province, Sumatra, under the Forestry and Environment Research and Development Agency (FOERDIA), Ministry of Environment and Forestry of Indonesia. The project has contributed to the achievement of conservation goals through revitalization of the existing conservation programmes, harvest control systems, and regeneration programmes. It has established four ex-situ conservation plots of two indigenous species such as Sumatran yew, and Sumatran merbau. In West Sumatra, an ex-situ conservation plot of four hectares of Andalas, Kulim, Merbau and Giam was established with a small area of an educational plot for Andalas in a strategic location.

The Delegation of Japan commended the Executing Agency for the successful completion of the project and welcomed the Executing Agency's plans to sustainably manage all conservation and demonstration plots established by the project.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that completion report, technical reports and final financial audit report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 710/13 Rev.1 (F) as completed.

8.2 Completed Pre-project

The Committee noted that there was no pre-project to be declared complete at this session.

Item 9 - Ex-post Evaluation

The Committee noted that the list of ex-post evaluation 2015-2016 was extended for a period of 2018-2019 at its Fifty-first and Fifty-second Sessions. The Committee also noted that the recommended ex-post evaluation included the following completed projects under two thematic groups:

- 1) Thematic Group on Forest Rehabilitation, Landscape Restoration, and Secondary Forest Management
 - PD 372/05 Rev.1 (F) Contribution to Forest Rehabilitation in Thailand's Areas Affected by Tsunami Disaster (Thailand)
 - PD 501/08 Rev.1 (F) Promoting Household Reforestation in Tropical Zone of Southwestern China through Development and Extension of Household-Oriented Techniques (China)
- 2) Thematic Group dealing with Biodiversity Conservation and Conservation Areas
 - PD 165/02 Rev.3 (F) Conservation of Biological Diversity through Sustainable Forest Management Practices (Malaysia)
 - PD 288/04 Rev. 2 (F) Development of Lanjak Entimau Wildlife Sanctuary as a Totally Protected Area, Phase IV (Final Phase) (Malaysia)
 - PD 451/07 Rev.1 (F) Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation Area: The Pulong Tau National Park, Sarawak State, Malaysia - Phase II (Malaysia)

The Secretariat informed the delay in completing projects, which have funds budgeted for ex-post evaluation, did not allow to conduct the ex-post evaluation of the two abovementioned Thematic Groups. After securing funds for the ex-post evaluation, the ex-post evaluations for these two Thematic Groups will be conducted in cooperation with relevant international partners (e.g. CBD, IUFRO, IUCN, etc.) in 2020.

The Delegation of the United States recommended that terms of references for future ex-post evaluations should reflect the evaluation guidance specified in the newly adopted ITTO Environment and Social Management (ESM) guidelines

The Committee took note that in 2020 the ex-post evaluation will be carried out for the two abovementioned thematic groups.

Item 10 – Review of Projects and Pre-projects in Progress

The Committee was informed that the Secretariat's report and the Committee's discussion were limited to the following projects and pre-projects in order to expedite proceedings, in accordance with the Section VI of Annex A to Decision 4(XXV):

- Those having implementation problems;
- Those requiring additional funds;
- Those requesting extension of more than six months beyond the original duration; or
- Those requesting essential major modifications of the work plan and budget.

10.1 Projects

The Committee took note of the status of projects that had been approved by the Council, as contained in Document CRF(LIII)/3 Rev.1, as categorized: (A) projects under implementation (thirteen projects); (B) projects awaiting implementation agreement (none); and (C) projects awaiting financing (twenty-three projects).

Then, the Committee considered the implementation issues, details of which were as follows:

(A) Projects under implementation

1) PD 507/08 Rev.1 (F) Development of the National Reforestation Policy and Afforestation Strategy Consistent with Liberia 3C-Approach (Liberia)

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the implementation of this project by the Forestry Development Authority (FDA) of Liberia, as follows:

- The project implementation period has been further extended until December 2019, without additional ITTO funds by the ITTO Secretariat, based on an official request including proper justification with appropriate detailed work plan and budget;
- However, the completion of most activities has been delayed because of the delay in updating the databank with the silvicultural data of existing plantations, due to the difficulty to access these forest plantations. One of the reasons was the political insecurity in the counties where are located these forest plantations, over several months of the year 2019; and
- Subsequent to the abovementioned delay in the completion of important project activities, the project executing agency (Forest Development Authority -FDA- of Liberia) requested for the extension of the project implementation period until 30 April 2020, without additional ITTO costs, based on an acceptable work plan for the extension period.

The Delegation of Liberia thanked ITTO and the donors (Japan, Switzerland and USA) for the financial support through the implementation of the project as well as Professor Jürgen Blaser, School of Agricultural, Forestry and Food Sciences (HAFL), Bern University of Applied Sciences, for his technical support to the project executing agency (FDA-Libeia) in 2019 and also during the extension period until 30 April 2020. The restructuring undertaken in 2018-2019 has led to the change of officers in charge of the implementation of this project, with an impact in delaying the project implementation. The stakeholders national workshop was held in late November 2019 instead August 2019. The extension of the project implementation period will allow the projet executing agency to finalize the policy documents to be used as basis for the development of forest plantations and forest restoration activities in Liberia.

The Committee took note of the information provided by the Delegation of Liberia and approved the project extension until 30 April 2020, without additional ITTO funds, based on the work plan for the extension period.

2) PD 552/09 Rev.1 (F) Encouraging Customary Landowners in the Lowlands of Papua New Guinea's Central Province to Reforest their Grasslands with High Value Trees (PNG)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Executing Agency has worked for the creation of a model reforestation framework that encourages customary landowners in the Central Province lowlands to grow high value trees on their grasslands. However, the implementation of some activities has been long delayed and the financial audit report for year 2018 has not yet been submitted to ITTO. In this regard, the Committee urged the Executing Agency in PNG to take urgent follow-up actions for the submission of the financial audit report for 2018 and a final extension proposal to fully complete all project activities for the success of the project.

3) PD 723/13 Rev.2 (F) Capacity Building for Strengthening Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation of the Taninthayi Range in Myanmar – Phase I Stage 1 (Myanmar)

The Delegation of the United States commended the Executing Agency for its extensive outreach activities in raising public awareness of forests in conjunction with celebration of the International Day for Forests 2019 in Myanmar.

4) PD 765/14 Rev.3 (F) Development of A Forest Landscape Restoration Program for Guatemala Based on ITTO Guidelines – Phase I (Guatemala)

The Delegation of the United States acknowledged that a national forest landscape restoration programme has been developed in line with the ITTO restoration guidelines. She also noted that finalizing

the draft new ITTO FLR guidelines would benefit from the lessons learned from the implementation of the project.

(B) Projects awaiting implementation agreement

The Committee noted that no project is currently awaiting implementation agreement, as contained in Document CRF(LIII)/3 Rev.1.

(C) Projects awaiting financing

The Committee noted that the following twenty-three projects approved at earlier and current sessions were still awaiting funding, out of which twelve projects with an asterisk (*) will be sunset between the 53rd and 54th CRF Sessions if funding is not made available.

- 1) PD 712/13 Rev.2 (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)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project in Indonesia was approved under the Spring 2014 Project Cycle and its validity was extended based on a request from the Ministry of Environment Conservation and Forestry based on the rules and procedures of ITTO. The project was partially funded in the amount of US\$100,000 (Republic of Korea) during the ITTC 54 in November 2018. If sufficient funding to start the implementation of this project is not secured before May 2020, this project will be sunset in the beginning of June 2020 in accordance with the ITTO sunset provision which specifies a 26-months validating period after the funding date.

- 2) PD 723/13 Rev.2 (F) Capacity Building for Strengthening Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation of the Taninthayi Range in Myanmar – Phase I Stage 2 (Myanmar)
- 3) PD 765/14 Rev.3 (F) Development of A Forest Landscape Restoration Program for Guatemala Based on ITTO Guidelines – Phase II (Guatemala)
- 4) PD 781/15 Rev.3 (F)* Master Plan for the Repositioning of Forest Management as A Competitive Land Use in the Agroforestry Landscape of the Northern Region of Costa Rica (Costa Rica)
- 5) PD 808/16 Rev.3 (F) Conservation of African Barwood (*Pterocarpus Erinaceus Poir*) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities (Côte d'Ivoire)
- 6) PD 818/16 Rev.3 (F) "BOSS - CUSHABATAY" Project – Forest Management and Restoration in the Cushabatay Basin on the Eastern Slope of the Cordillera Azul National Park (PNCAZ), Peru (Peru)
- 7) PD 836/17 Rev.1 (F)* Enhancing Capacity of Local Communities and Forest Administration to Effectively Implement Community Forestry Programme (CFP) in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces of Cambodia (Cambodia)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that this project has been submitted by the Forest Administration of Cambodia and it approved in August 2017. The project was partially funded in the amount of US\$100,000 (Republic of Korea) during the ITTC 54 in November 2018. If sufficient funding to start the implementation of this project is not secured before May 2020, this project will be sunset in the beginning of June 2020 in accordance with the ITTO sunset provision which specifies a 26-months validating period after the funding date.

- 8) PD 842/17 Rev.2 (F)* Exploring Innovative and Appropriate Tenure Conflicts Resolution Model on State Forest for Strengthening Forest Management Unit (Kesatuan Pengelolaan Hutan/KPH) in Implementing Sustainable Forest Management (Indonesia)

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

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the project was submitted by the Costa Rican Institute of Technology, School of Forestry and Research Centre for Forestry Innovation and it was approved in September 2018. The project was partially funded in the amount of US\$100,000 (USA) during the ITTC 54 in November 2018. If sufficient funding to start the implementation of this project is not secured before May 2020, this project will be sunset in May 2020 in accordance with the ITTO sunset provision which specifies a 26-months validating period after the funding date.

- 10) PD 852/17 Rev.3 (F) Development of a Regional Strategy for the Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Areas on the South Coast of Peru (Peru)
- 11) PD 853/17 Rev.2 (F) Forest Fire Prevention and Response in Tropical Forests and Forest Plantations in Peru (Peru)
- 12) PD 868/18 Rev.1 (F)* Improving Local Governance for Landscape Restoration in the San Alejandro River Sub-watershed, Padre Abad Province, Department of Ucayali, Peru (Peru)
- 13) PD 873/18 Rev.1 (F)* Integrated Management of Natural Resources and Biodiversity in the Tacaná Volcano and its Area of Influence in Mexico and Guatemala – Phase II (Guatemala)
- 14) PD 877/18 Rev.2 (F) Taper and Commercial Volume Systems for the Planning of the Sustainable Management of Ten Tropical Forest Species in Quintana Roo, Mexico (Mexico)
- 15) PD 881/18 Rev.1 (F)* Gender Mainstreaming in the Development of Actions to Control Deforestation and Forest Degradation in the Congo Basin (Cameroon)
- 16) PD 884/18 Rev.1 (F)* Pilot Sustainable Management Systems for Secondary Natural Forests in the Collective Afro-descendant Community Territory of the Bajo Calima Community Council, Municipality of Buenaventura, Colombia (Colombia)
- 17) PD 887/18 Rev.1 (F)* Production and Availability of Teak Clone Varieties: Development of Improved Plant Material for Reforestation in Togo (Togo)
- 18) PD 888/18 Rev.1 (F)* Enhancement of the Participatory Bushfire Prevention and Management System in Togo (Togo)
- 19) PD 890/18 Rev.2 (F) Rehabilitation of the Upper Bandama Gazetted Forest in the North of Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of the Local People (Côte d'Ivoire)
- 20) PD 891/18 Rev.1 (F)* Bamboo for Life: An Alternative for the Rehabilitation of Degraded Forest Lands and Sustainable Rural Development in the San Martin Region, Peru (Peru)
- 21) PD 894/19 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening of Community Forest Management in Peru (Peru)
- 22) PD 895/19 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening the Participation of Women in Rural Communities for the Development of Ecotourism Service Enterprises and Sustainable Business Models on the Coast of Veracruz, Mexico (Mexico)
- 23) PD 905/19 Rev.1 (F) Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo (Togo)

D) Projects to be subject to possible termination process

In accordance with the rules and procedures applying to ITTO projects, the Committee considered recommending the termination of the following projects because of the non-submission of the final financial audit report which is considered as due since 2016.

1) PD 383/05 Rev.2 (F) Community Forest Development in Gabon (Gabon)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Fifty-second Session of the Committee urged the project implementing agency to submit the final financial audit report, which is considered as due since 2016, by 31 March 2019.

The final financial audit report was submitted in the end of November 2019, after the finalization of the Committee working documents. It has to be reviewed by the ITTO Secretariat, in order to be reported as completed in the next Committee session, provided that the report is considered as acceptable. Therefore, the reason to keep this project under this Committee agenda item is no longer relevant.

The Delegation of Gabon apologized for the long delay in submitting the final financial audit, beyond the abovementioned deadline of 31 March 2019. The executing agency is waiting for comments, from the ITTO Secretariat, derived from the review of the final financial audit report, for appropriate actions.

The Committee took note of the submission of the final financial report of the project PD 383/05 Rev.2 (F) to be reviewed by the ITTO Secretariat, in view of reporting this project as completed in the next Committee session, if the report is considered as acceptable.

2) PD 653/12 Rev.1 (F) Sustainable, Mixed and Pure Forest Plantation Development in the Transitional Zone of Ghana's Biakoye District Assembly, Employing Poverty Reduction Strategies (Ghana)

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Fifty-second Session of the Committee urged the project implementing agency to submit the final financial audit report, which is considered as due since 2016, by 31 March 2019.

The Delegation of Ghana apologized for the non-submission of the final financial audit report regarding the implementation of the project and informed the Committee that a letter of commitment was provided by the executing agency, for the submission of the final financial audit report by end of February 2020. That letter will be forwarded to the ITTO Secretariat, for perusal.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that measures have been taken to avoid such problem to happen again with the implementation of future projects. One of the measures is dealing with a special provision which will be added in the revised agreement, governing the implementation of future project. That provision will allow the Secretariat to keep the funds for financial auditing, in order to directly pay for the auditor, so that the final financial audit report could be made available in due time.

The Delegation of Japan thanked the ITTO Secretariat and the Government of Ghana for the follow-up actions which led to the commitment of the project executing agency to submit the final financial audit report to the ITTO Secretariat. The final financial audit report is considered as an important evidence to justify to the Ministry of Finance of Japan that taxpayers money was appropriately spent for the implementation of an ITTO project funded by Japan. He also acknowledged that the new financial auditing systems of the ITTO Secretariat are contributing to the improvements of financial auditing of ITTO projects in order to avoid the non-submission of final financial audit reports in the future.

The Committee took note of the commitment of the project executing agency (PICODEV) of PD 653/12 Rev.1 (F) to submit the final financial audit report, by end of February 2020, in view of reporting this project as completed in the next Committee session, if the report is considered as acceptable.

10.2 Pre-projects

The Committee took note of the status of approved pre-projects, as contained in Document CRF(LIII)/3 Rev.1 and considered the implementation issues, details of which were as follows:

(A) Pre-projects under implementation

The Committee noted that there were no issues of the one pre-project currently under implementation.

(B) Pre-projects awaiting implementation agreement

The Committee noted that one project is currently awaiting implementation agreement, as contained in Document CRF(LIII)/3 Rev.1.

- 1) PPD 189/17 Rev.3 (F) Development of A Full Project Proposal to Generate Tools to Ensure the Establishment of Timber Forest Species through Natural Regeneration in the Province of Tahuamanu, Peru (Peru)

(C) Pre-projects awaiting financing

The Committee noted that two pre-projects approved at earlier and current sessions were still awaiting funding, out of which one pre-project with an asterisk (*) will become sunset between the 53rd and 54th CRF Sessions if funding is not secured before the next session.

- 1) PPD 192/18 Rev.1 (F)* Formulation of A Project Proposal on “Strengthening Forest Research to Improve the Efficient Use of Timber and The Conservation and Sustainable Development of Forests in Guatemala” (Guatemala)
- 2) PPD 196/19 Rev.1 (F) Support for Operational and Planning Capacity-building for Stakeholders in the Private and Community Forestry Sector in Togo (Togo)

Item 11 - Biennial Work Programme of the Committee for 2020-2021

In accordance with the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Working Group on Financing Infrastructure and Fundraising Strategies to extend ITTO Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018 to the end of 2020 as well as the recommendation of the Informal Advisory Group to extend the BWP 2018-2019 for a period of one year, the Committee noted that the ITTO Biennial Work Programme of the Committee for 2018-2019 was extended to the end of 2020.

Item 12 - Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2020

Mr. Bruno Enrique Arias Rivas (Guatemala) was elected as Chairperson for 2020. Ms. Aysha Ghadiali (USA) was elected as Vice-Chairperson for 2020.

Item 13 - Dates and Venues of the Fifty-fourth and Fifty-fifth Sessions of the Committee

The Fifty-fourth Session of the Committee would be held in conjunction with the Fifty-sixth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council to be convened in Yokohama, Japan.

The Fifty-fifth Session of the Committee would be held in conjunction with the Fifty-seventh Session of the International Tropical Timber Council.

Item 14 - Other Business

None

Item 15 - Recommendations to the International Tropical Timber Council

- (A) The Committee recommended that funding be made immediately available for the following projects and pre-project approved under the Project Cycle 2019:

Projects

- | | |
|---------------------|---|
| PD 808/16 Rev.3 (F) | Conservation of African Barwood (<i>Pterocarpus Erinaceus Poir</i>) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities [ITTO Budget: US\$ 583,043] |
| PD 818/16 Rev.3 (F) | “BOSS - CUSHABATAY” Project – Forest Management and Restoration in the Cushabatay Basin on the Eastern Slope of the Cordillera Azul National Park (PNCAZ), Peru [ITTO Budget: US\$ 454,558] |

- PD 852/17 Rev.3 (F) Development of a Regional Strategy for the Restoration and Rehabilitation of Degraded Areas on the South Coast of Peru [ITTO Budget: US\$ 149,968]
- PD 877/18 Rev.2 (F) Taper and Commercial Volume Systems for the Planning of the Sustainable Management of Ten Tropical Forest Species in Quintana Roo, Mexico [ITTO Budget: US\$ 144,512]
- PD 890/18 Rev.2 (F) Rehabilitation of the Upper Bandama Gazetted Forest in the North of Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of the Local People [ITTO Budget: US\$ 583,785]
- PD 894/19 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening of Community Forest Management in Peru [ITTO Budget: US\$ 571,879]
- PD 895/19 Rev.1 (F) Strengthening the Participation of Women in Rural Communities for the Development of Ecotourism Service Enterprises and Sustainable Business Models on the Coast of Veracruz, Mexico [ITTO Budget: US\$ 155,599]
- PD 905/19 Rev.1 (F) Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo [ITTO Budget: US\$ 504,194]

Pre-projects

- PPD 196/19 Rev.1 (F) Support for Operational and Planning Capacity-building for Stakeholders in the Private and Community Forestry Sector in Togo [ITTO Budget: US\$ 85,792]
- (B) The Committee recommended that the final draft "ITTO Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines" should be adopted by the Council and that the assessment process set out in the ESM Guidelines should be applied in formulating future project proposals.
- (C) The Committee recommended that the draft "Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) in the Tropics" should be revised, taking into account Members comments submitted to the Secretariat by 15 January 2020. The Committee also recommended that the final draft FLR Guidelines should be posted on the ITTO website from 1 March to 20 March 2020 for the adoption of these Guidelines through an electronic non-objection procedure. The Committee also encouraged that Members, the private sector, local communities and other stakeholders apply the adopted FLR Guidelines, where appropriate, as a contribution towards the restoration of degraded tropical forest landscapes.

Item 16 - Report of the Session

The Committee accepted this Report for submission to the Council. The members of the Committee expressed their appreciation for the able manner in which the Chairperson conducted the session of the Committee with assistance of the Secretariat.

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