

1. General Description:

ID:CN-21009

Project resulting from this CN: N/A

Note: CNs are developed into project proposals following consultation with donor(s).

1.1 Project Title:

Strengthening and consolidating the national process for addressing illegal logging and associated trade in Cameroon

1.2 Submitting Country/ies:

Cameroon

1.3 Specific Location & Country/ies/regions/areas benefitting from the project:

Cameroon

1.4 Endorsement from ITTO Focal Point:

Letter of endorsement.pdf

1.5 Intended Project Duration (in months):

24

1.6 Indicative Budget (in US\$):

ITTO	201,581
Counterpart	6,725
Total	208,306

1.7 Programme Line Focus

Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains (LSSC)

1.8 Project Type

Capacity Building/Training, Innovation, Policy development/implementation

1.9 Proposal Summary:

This concept note is partly based on TRAFFIC's 2017 proposal, submitted to ITTO (serial number: TFL-PD 839/17 (M) and approved but not funded. The 2017 proposal had been developed based on lessons learnt and experience acquired from an earlier ITTO project "Strengthening the national process for controlling illegal logging and associated trade in Cameroon (TFL-PD 003/09 Rev (2) M)", jointly implemented by TRAFFIC and the Ministry of Forest and Wildlife (MINFOF) in Cameroon. This present concept note also incorporates action points discussed during a recent two-day meeting between MINFOF and TRAFFIC. It will consolidate achievements of the previous project, taking account of recent developments in the forestry sector, continuing to build capacity and coordination between two key actors (MINFOF and Ministry of Finance-Customs), all designed to address key forest governance issues and legality and transparency in the timber trade in Cameroon. By the end of the project in 2023, expected outputs are: i) An updated and relevant legal framework is developed and submitted to the governing bodies ii) capacity to track and intercept illegal shipments will be improved iii) a platform for information exchange related to forest management and infringement /crime records will be operational. Key activities include: a review of the forestry policy; high-level advocacy for the adoption of an amended forestry law; the provision to MINFOF of operational tools for effective enforcement of the law; the dissemination of tools, guides and manuals on forestry legislation and harvesting; optimizing use of the information exchange and seizures data platform AFRICA-TWIX and the initiation of a data information sharing system between MINFOF and MINFI (Customs). The governance structure put in place for this project, with MINFOF at the centre of implementation, will ensure an exit plan for their full empowerment in the activities and products/deliverables generated at the end of the project.

2. Proponent Information:

2.1 Executing Agency Information:

Name of Agency/Organization/Institution:

TRAFFIC International

Name of main Contact Person:

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2.2 Type of Organization:

International Organization

2.3 Collaborating Agency/ies:

Name of Agency/Organization/Institution:

Ministry of Forest and Wildlife

Name of main Contact Person:

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2.4 Relevant experience of EA:

TRAFFIC's work on forest governance and timber trade, in Cameroon and globally, tackles legality and sustainability challenges in the supply chain through engagement and provision of resources and training for industry and Government agencies. This draws on cross-cutting expertise in behavior change, data analysis and tackling financial crime. TRAFFIC has operated in Cameroon for over 13 years. Previous timber projects include partnerships with ITTO, DFID, WCO and EU.

3. Relevance:

3.1 Conformity with ITTO objectives (ITTA, 2006) and priorities (current SAP):

The project goals and expected outcomes fulfil ITTO's objectives and priorities under the 2006 International Tropical Timber Agreement (ITTA 2006) in particular: (d) Enhancing the capacity of members to implement strategies for achieving exports of tropical timber and timber products from sustainably managed sources; (l) Strengthening the capacity of members for the collection, processing and dissemination of statistics on their trade in timber and information on the sustainable management of their tropical forests; (n) Strengthening the capacity of members to improve forest law enforcement and governance, and address illegal logging and related trade in tropical timber.

3.2 Relevance to the ITTO Programme Lines:

The proposed project has relevance to the ITTO Programmatic line #1: Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains Identify and promote incentives throughout the tropical timber demand and supply chain to increase efforts to address sustainability, legality and traceability by the introduction of the timber tracker tool Enhance the capacity of tropical timber producing countries for the production of legal and sustainable timber and non-timber products and services

3.3 Relevance to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the Global Forest Goals (GFGs) and other forest related global agenda:

SDG 12: Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns. Will promote sustainable harvesting of high value timber species through improved management and transparency (12.2) in Cameroon (12.1) UNSPF Global Forest Goals GFG1: Reverse the loss of forest cover worldwide through sustainable forest management, including protection, restoration, afforestation and reforestation, and increase efforts to prevent forest degradation and contribute to the global effort of addressing climate change. GFG 3: Increase significantly the area of protected forests worldwide and other areas of sustainably managed forests, as well as the proportion of forest products from sustainably managed forests. GFG 5: Promote governance frameworks to implement sustainable forest management.

3.4 Relevance to submitting country's policies:

The forest-wildlife sector is the second largest source of employment in Cameroon, and makes a contribution of about 3.7% to Cameroon's non-oil GDP (Eba'a et al. 2013). Illegal logging is one of the many threats facing these forests. In order to stem such activities and ensure that forests are sustained, the government has developed and put in place various policies and legal frameworks to govern the sector including: 1993 Forestry Policy, Forest Law of 1994, Environment Framework Act of 1996, Yaoundé Declaration of 1999 and the Convergence Plan of the Central African Forests Commission (COMIFAC), National Development Strategy 2020-2030 (NDS30), African Forest Law Enforcement and Governance and Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) commitments and the FLEGT-Voluntary Partnership Agreement (VPA) with the European Union (December 2011). This project also supports the national policy on sustainable management of forest resources which has as its overall goal maintaining and developing economic, ecological and social functions of forests in Cameroon, as part of an integrated management, which ensures sustained and sustainable, conservation and use of forest resources and ecosystems. Although this project will take the opportunity to review and update Cameroon's Forest Policy, it is worth noting that, the concept supports the following two themes of the Forest Policy: i) Develop forest resources in order to increase the share of forest production in GDP, while preserving the productive potential ii) Revitalize the forestry sector by setting up an effective institutional system and involving all stakeholders in the management of the sector. The project is also in line with the forest and wildlife sub-sectoral strategy which 'projects an ecologically viable and economically prosperous green Cameroon, that ensures the conservation of its biological diversity and the rational use of natural resources for present and future generations.

3.5 Linkages to previous/ongoing ITTO and other projects/activities (if any):

The ITTO project implemented by TRAFFIC “Strengthening the national process for controlling illegal logging and associated trade in Cameroon” covered the period October 2011 to April 2014. Project outputs included development of training materials for government staff responsible for enforcing logging and timber trade controls; development of a database of stakeholders involved in forest law enforcement in Cameroon; creation of an inter-agency committee for collaboration; identification of threats and gaps in the timber trade legislation and traceability (SIGIF); recommendations for an online timber trade information management system dedicated to more transparency and inter-agency communication. Additional intervention opportunities, which could not be addressed within the timeframe of that project included fraudulent harvesting certificates, lack of correlation between contract volumes and the forest areas allocated for logging, lack of clear linkages between the traceability system (SIGIF) and transportation waybills and uncontrolled harvesting of CITES-protected species. The ultimate consequences of such shortfalls include: a lack of credibility in timber export documents, loss of tax revenue and livelihood income to forest communities and increased threats to biodiversity. This ITTO proposal will address the issues related to a traceability system. Further work was undertaken between 2015 – 2021 to support the timber trade legality process from Cameroon to China (phase 1) and from Cameroon, Republic of the Congo to China, plus Vietnam (phase 2) funded by the UK Foreign Commonwealth Development Office. One project result was an MOU signed with a Chinese company for the sourcing of legal timber from community forests. The AFRICA-TWIX project under implementation in Central Africa promotes information and data exchange between various law enforcement officials and will continue to coordinate efforts to combat illegal logging.

4. Project synopsis:

4.1 Objectives (reflecting reference to elements within all ITTO Guidelines as applicable):

Development objective: Improve forest governance to increase the volume of legal timber in Cameroon. It is expected that by the end of the project in 2023: i) progress will have been made towards the goal of full compliance with a timber legality assurance system ii) forestry sector tax revenues will have increased. Specific objective: To reduce illegal logging and associated illegal timber trade in Cameroon. It is expected that by the end of the project: i) A relevant and up-to-date forestry policy and legal framework is developed and submitted for consideration by the governing bodies. ii) The provision of operational tools and supporting guides improves the tracking of timber and law enforcement capacity. iii) A system for the exchange of information related to forest management, trade and enforcement records is operational and accessible by both MINFOF and MINFI.

4.2 Key problem(s) to be addressed:

Forests (including Non-Timber Forest Products) are threatened by various factors including illegal logging and the associated trade driven by export markets, although local markets are also beginning to have an impact. A priority issue, which undermines efforts to address the challenges of climate change, good governance and sustainable trade, is the outdated 1993 Forest Policy. The Forest Policy provides the framework for any subsequent forestry legislation, including the 1994 Forest Law, which in its current form, fails to cover the demands put on the country's forestry sector. The previous ITTO project identified and documented some of the illegal practices that threaten forests in Cameroon (as mentioned in section 3.5 above). In addition, there are challenging operational issues for MINFOF which need to be addressed if it is to be fully effective in managing timber resources. This includes refinement of the SIGIF (2) platform, which for reasons of complexity and time, lies outside the scope of this proposal. There are however two areas which can be readily addressed, both of which are fundamental to the full implementation of SIGIF 2. One is the introduction of a timber tracking tool that can link to the SIGIF system, for validation and verification of movements of forest products, beginning with logs (from legal sources), through the supply chain to the point of export. Second is the need for training on legality, verification and validation of timber movements, which currently is not sufficiently covered by government budgets. There are various training documents and materials in existence, but these need to be updated, consolidated and supported with physical training as part of MINFOF's continuous staff improvement program. Cameroon is a key exporter of tropical logs and timber, synergy of action between MINFOF and MINFI Officials must also be further enhanced to combat corruption and laundering of illegal logs and associated timber trade.

4.3 Main stakeholders and beneficiaries:

Primary stakeholders and beneficiaries: Government of Cameroon (MINFOF and MINFI-Customs) – as primary users of the tracker tool and information exchange system. Secondary stakeholders and beneficiaries: The private sector timber industry in Cameroon – as a group, are expected to follow the protocols and procedures imposed by law. Further clarity in legislation will help the industry to be compliant. Local communities – especially those local traditional chiefs and their communities in seven community owned forests associated with the ReCTrad Network of Traditional Rulers for the Sustainable Management of Ecosystems in Central Africa (Reseau des Chefs Traditionnels d’Afrique pour la gestion durable de la biodiversité et des écosystemes et des forets) that will be identified in a project funded by a European government donor. Our funded project will work on the outreach and capacity building trainings on legality to these groups, complemented by this ITTO funding. Cameroon NGO SAILD (Service d’Appui aux Initiatives Locales de Développement) is the local member of the SAILD international network. TRAFFIC’s funded project will also work with SAILD to build capacities of farmers and small holders in Cameroon, complementing SAILD’s COTTRACKS App to trace timber and collect field data for community forests and small holders to the timber tracker activities in this concept. This ITTO concept will link the App to the training events and outreach to target stakeholders.

4.4 Key activities:

1. Draft a new Forestry Policy and Forest Law for public consultation 1.1. Develop TOR and recruit a Consultant to draft a new Forestry Policy and amendment to the Forest Law 1.2. Facilitate meetings with MINFOF to review and agree the draft Forestry Policy document & draft Forest Law. 1.3. Present revised Forestry Policy & Forest Law at meeting with the Prime Minister's office to prime for next stage of public consultations. 2. Conduct high-level advocacy for the adoption of the new Forestry Policy and Law. 2.1. Design and develop an advocacy initiative, building on behavior change science to develop the right messaging, communications materials and the means of engagement to secure a favourable consideration of the new forestry policy and law during the stakeholder consultation process. 2.2. MINFOF will deliver communications messaging to target audiences. 3. Provide MINFOF with operational tools for effective enforcement of the law. 3.1. Acquisition, training and support for the implementation of a Timber Tracker Tool at 5 strategic MINFOF forest produce checkpoints (to complement work under the complementary project and in partnership with private sector companies). 3.2. Identify existing tools, guides and manuals covering legality in the forestry sector, consolidate and update the various materials for dissemination, including a plan for prioritising key target staff and units.
4. Optimize the use of the information exchange and seizures data platform AFRICA-TWIX. 4.1. Recruit new field-based members (MINFOF & MINFI-Customs) to the platform through focal point representatives at Central Offices of Ministries. 5. Facilitate a data information sharing system between MINFOF and MINFI Customs. 5.1. Develop a TOR for information sharing of data collected from timber tracker. 5.2. Organize a round table to agree TOR within the framework of an MOU between MINFOF and Customs. 5.3. Support development of data sharing system

4.5 Expected outcomes and impacts, including innovation/transformation:

This proposal is designed to address (in so far as the budget will stretch) some key weaknesses in the management of forest resources in Cameroon. These include an incomplete and outdated legal framework; a lack of transparency and poor control of timber activities, low overall operational capacity for MINFOF law enforcement officials, all of which are compounded by poor coordination and information exchange between law enforcement officials, especially MINFOF and MINFI. The innovation of a timber tracker tool, pioneered in the Tanzania forestry service with assistance from TRAFFIC, will assist Cameroon to address its timber traceability challenges. The successful implementation of activities will result in the following outcomes: Progress towards the target of full compliance of traded timber in Cameroon with the timber legality assurance system; Progress towards enhanced transparency and credibility of timber traded by Cameroon at both the national and international levels; Increased State revenue earned from forestry sector taxes. The ultimate impact of the project is to improve forest governance to increase the volume of legal timber in Cameroon. MINFOF will be central to the implementation of the project, supporting and fully participating as part of a capacity building process to empower and create institutional sustainability as part of the project exit plan.

4.6 Existing funding for (related) initiative(s)/established contacts to potential donors:

TRAFFIC is currently finalizing a five-year funding agreement with a European Government funder addressing climate and forest work, which will complement the activities in this proposal. This project funding will focus on three main areas of work: Outcome 1: Indigenous Peoples and Local Communities in ReCTrad network, wood-based industry and Chinese operators increasingly place legal timber in the supply chain in Cameroon and Republic of Congo; Outcome 2: Private and public sector buyers in China and Vietnam increasingly comply with legislative frameworks for purchasing imported timber from Cameroon and Republic of Congo; and Outcome 3: Strengthened transparency and knowledge along the timber value chain, to include enforcement agencies and through increased suspicious transaction reporting by financial institutions to law enforcement. The project will also include the development of a Wood ID tool, using timber species macroscopic anatomy identification, and state of the art machine vision learning to be able to identify timber species in a field-ready Wood ID tool. The European funded project will complement and support the ITTO proposed project in pilot testing the timber tracker tool at fifteen key timber check points. Along the same theme, TRAFFIC funding already secured under the ReTTA project, will provide the opportunity to conduct a baseline study on the Cameroon timber traceability system, to gather information and identify the check points where the timber tracker tool will be pilot tested. The proposed ITTO-funded work will further build on the AFRICA -TWIX project, operational in Cameroon since 2016, to offer a platform of information and seizure data exchange for real and joint action of two key law enforcement groups, forestry and customs officials, thereby encouraging greater collaboration between these two important players.

4.7 Any other information deemed necessary/important:

TRAFFIC has an established and trusted relationship with MINFOF and Customs, as both stakeholders are partners to TRAFFIC in past and present projects covering forest governance, timber trade legality, the AFRICA -TWIX information sharing and seizures data exchange, and capacity building in law enforcement. TRAFFIC, along with WWF, ZSL, and IUCN, supported the recently published national anti-poaching and wildlife crime strategy for Cameroon (2020-2030), currently being implemented primarily by MINFOF, with the support of other agencies. TRAFFIC and MINFOF are collaborating extensively under the TRAFFIC AFRICA-TWIX platform and processes are underway for MoUs to be signed soon. The text has been approved by both parties, supporting documents submitted to MINFOF and the final MOU is currently sitting with the Head of State cabinet, pending approval before formal signing. With MINFI (Customs), the General Directorate of Cameroon has assigned a task team to work on the details of an MOU and this team is meeting regularly to finalize the document for final approval. Moreover, TRAFFIC is a partner to the Commission of Central African Forests (COMIFAC) with whom there is a signed MoU for collaboration on activities in Central Africa. COMIFAC supervises the AFRICA-TWIX platform and will be an important collaborator in ensuring dissemination of project results to other countries in Central Africa. A TRAFFIC representative also chairs the Civil Society Advisory Group (CSAG) of ITTO, where we can disseminate information of relevance back to ITTO Council and members, especially on work with local communities.

4.8 Risk mitigation measures:

Risks that may hinder achievement of results fall into two categories: internal and external. INTERNAL i) Project stakeholders do not engage proactively. TRAFFIC, as part of the design and planning process of this project concept, has already engaged with the main stakeholder, MINFOF, to secure their contributions and support during a meeting that took place in early April. For other stakeholders, if the proposal is successful, engagement will be initiated before and during the project launch workshop. Three MINFOF staff have been selected to be part of the project management unit to provide guidance to project implementation. This will also ensure continued ownership of the initiatives at the end of the project. The project steering committee will also be chaired by MINFOF. Given the potential benefits to MINFI, it is not envisaged that there will be any reluctance to participate in the design and implementation of a shared information system with MINFOF. ii) Poor uptake of training and materials provided to forest sector officials. TRAFFIC has extensive experience in the design and delivery of support and will draw on this to ensure that training and guidance documentation is relevant and engaging. EXTERNAL i) COVID inhibits project activities. If necessary, TRAFFIC will increase use of virtual communications for project management and implementation. However, it is inevitable that some trainings which require face to face interaction to be fully effective (such as the timber tracker tool), may have to be postponed. ii) Conflict and civil unrest within the country. In this case the project will adaptively manage the situation and shift any field training activities to safer locations. iii) Financial impact of currency fluctuations. TRAFFIC monitors exchange rates on an ongoing basis and adjusts spending accordingly to avoid negative budget variances.

5. Indicative Budget (in US\$):

Indicative Budget (in US\$):

Description	ITTO	Counterpart	Total
Personnel	67,175	0	67,175
Sub-contracts	42,000	0	42,000
Travel and DSA	19,496	3,300	22,796
Capital Items	0	3,425	3,425
Consumables	2,276	0	2,276
Publication / Dissemination	2,239	0	2,239
Miscellaneous	16,797	0	16,797
Total	149,983	6,725	156,708

ITTO Project Monitoring & Review	20,000	-	20,000
Annual/Final Audit	10,000	-	10,000
ITTO Programme Support	21,598	-	21,598
ITTO Ex-post Evaluation	0	-	0
GRAND TOTAL	201,581	6,725	208,306