



**INTERNATIONAL TROPICAL  
TIMBER COUNCIL**

Distr.  
GENERAL

ITTC(LVII)/5  
22 October 2021

Original: ENGLISH

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**REPORT OF THE EXPERT PANEL  
FOR TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS**

**Fifty-sixth Expert Panel  
Virtual review June/July 2021**

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**REPORT OF THE 56<sup>th</sup> EXPERT PANEL FOR THE  
TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS  
(Expert Panel)  
VIRTUAL REVIEW**

## **1. EXIGENCIES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

The 56th meeting of the Expert Panel was scheduled to be held at the ITTO Secretariat in Yokohama, June-July 2021. Due to continued exigencies of the COVID-19 pandemic including immigration restrictions, quarantine requirements, disruption and cancelations of flight routes, it was not possible to physically convene the meeting or to reschedule. In order to not leave the fourteen proposals received under the Spring 2021 (Deadline 11 December 2020) and Autumn 2021 (Deadline 16 April 2021) cycles, the Secretariat proposed to the members of the Expert Panel a virtual review procedure (see section 4). The procedure was considered feasible and endorsed by the members of the Expert Panel.

## **2. TERMS OF REFERENCE**

The Expert Panel (ITTC/EP-56) worked in accordance with the Terms of Reference attached, see **Appendix I**. Furthermore, it has been guided by the endorsement of the Council at its 40th Session of Document ITTC (XL)/5 and, in particular the authorization contained in paragraph 7, to apply the “Revised ITTO System for Technical Appraisal of Project and Pre-project Proposals”. The Fifty-sixth Panel appraised the proposals and classified them according to categories listed in **Appendix II** applying the current consolidated version of the scoring system summarized in **Appendix V** and **Appendix VI**.

## **3. PANEL MEMBERSHIP**

The Fifty-sixth Expert Panel was attended by the eleven members listed in Appendix IV, with one nomination from the Consumer Group still pending at the time of preparing this report. Due to the virtual review process agreed (see section 4), no Chairperson was elected for this Expert Panel.

## **4. APPRAISAL PROCEDURES AND CRITERIA**

- 4.1. The procedures, aspects and guidelines applied by the Panel to appraise Project and Pre-project Proposals are laid down in the Terms of Reference of the Expert Panel for the Technical Appraisal of ITTO Project Proposals (Appendix I). The appraisal also took into account the Environmental and Social Management Guidelines (ESM) and the ITTO Policy Guidelines on Gender Equality and Empowering Women (GEEW).
- 4.2. The panel members also made use of the established ITTO scoring system for the technical appraisal for proposals which has been created as a tool to facilitate the categorization of the proposals.
- 4.3. All documentation needed by the Panel members for their appraisal was posted online (using Dropbox) including the proposals, review instructions, introductions of each proposal prepared by the Secretariat, scoring sheets, briefing notes for new panel members or relevant ITTO guidelines.
- 4.4. The virtual process was launched on 4 June 2021 with a deadline of 9 July 2021.
- 4.5. The appraisal procedure endorsed by the members of the Expert Panel included the following steps:
  - a) In accordance with established practice, each proposal was assigned to two Panel members, one from a Producer country and one from a Consumer country
  - b) Each Panel member would complete the common appraisal sheet (Scoring Table) for the proposals assigned to her/him
  - c) After completion the appraisal sheets (Scoring Table) would be returned to the ITTO Secretariat
  - d) In cases where both reviewers ranked a proposal as Category 1 (commended to the Committee with only minor modifications required), such proposal would go forward to the Committee/Council for approval
  - e) In cases where both reviewers ranked a proposal as Category 4 (not in line with ITTO objectives or requiring complete revision), the proposal would be returned to the proponent
  - f) In all other cases (reviewers have a divergence of views/rank differently, reviewers rank a proposal as Category 2 (requiring essentials revisions) or Category 3 (a pre-project is required), such proposals would be held until such time that the panel can physically meet.
- 4.6. In cases where revised proposals were submitted, the Panel members also referred to the overall and specific recommendations made by the earlier Panel(s) to assess if these recommendations had been adequately addressed.

## 5. APPRAISAL AND ASSESSMENT CARRIED OUT

- 5.1. Nine (9) projects and five (5) pre-projects (total of 14) proposals were received for appraisal by the Fifty-sixth Expert Panel, including one proposal, i.e., PD 922/21 (I) 'Promotion of Sustainable Domestic Wood Consumption in Vietnam', resulting from a concept note submitted under the first call for concept notes under ITTO's new financing architecture – phase II in accordance with Decision 4(LVI). The overall list of 14 Project/Pre-project Proposals reviewed by the Expert Panel and the category of decision allocated to each proposal is presented in Appendix III. The procedures and criteria applied for the assessment have been specified above in section 4.
- 5.2. The ITTO Secretariat allocated the Project and Pre-project Proposals in three blocks so that the Panel could deal with all proposals related to Reforestation and Forest Management (RFM) (11), then with those related to Forest Industry (I) (2), and finally with those related to Economics, Statistics and Markets (ESM) (1). This arrangement facilitated the appraisal as well as the formulation of the overall assessment and specific recommendations for each proposal listed in the Annex of this report.
- 5.3. The ITTO Secretariat assisted the work of the Panel by providing a general introduction of each proposal, also addressing any previous deliberations.
- 5.4. In following-up the results of the appraisal and following common practice, the Secretariat provided the following information and documents to all countries who have submitted proposals:
  - The Overall Assessment and Specific Recommendations on each proposal submitted by the country (Annex);
  - General findings and final categories commended by the Panel.

## 6. GENERAL FINDINGS

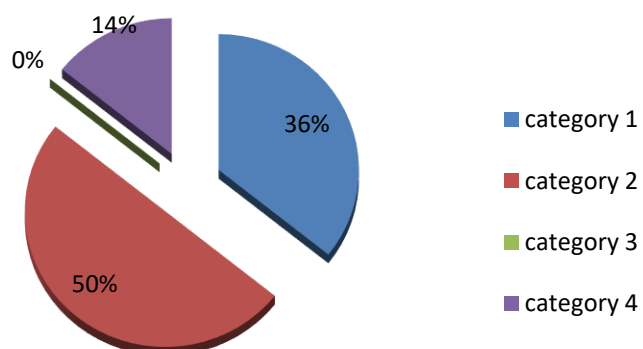
The Panel noted that:

- Five (5) Project Proposals: 3 Pre-projects and 2 Project Proposals (36 percent of the total) were commended to the Committee for final appraisal with minor modifications required (category 1);
- Seven (7) Project Proposals (50 percent of the total) will be sent back to proponents for essential revisions, rated as category 2;
- Zero (0) Project Proposal (0 percent of the total) received a category 3, indicating that the project requires a pre-project to better formulate a new proposal; and
- Two (2) Project Proposals: 1 Pre-project and 1 Project (14 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.

See paragraph 7, pie chart "*proposals by category*".

## 7. PANEL DECISIONS ON PROJECT AND PRE-PROJECT PROPOSALS

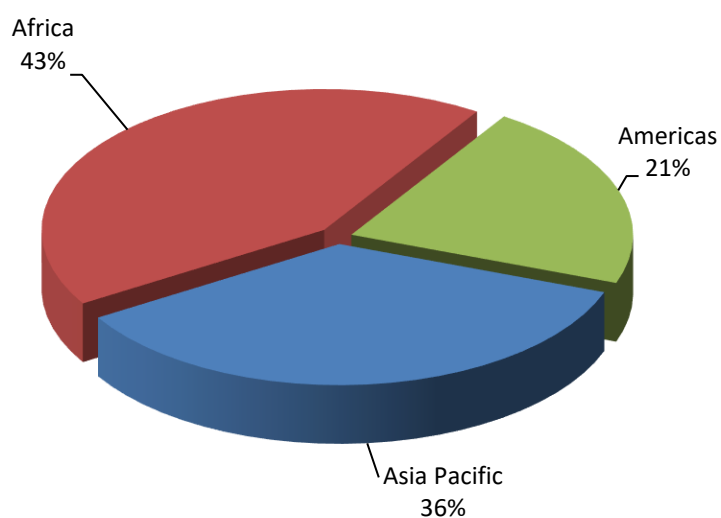
The Panel's decisions are listed in Appendix III, in accordance with established practice. Proposals classified by category, by regions, by committee areas and by submitting countries are summarised in the following tables and charts:



**Summary of Project and Pre-project Proposals submitted to the Fifty-sixth Expert Panel by Region**

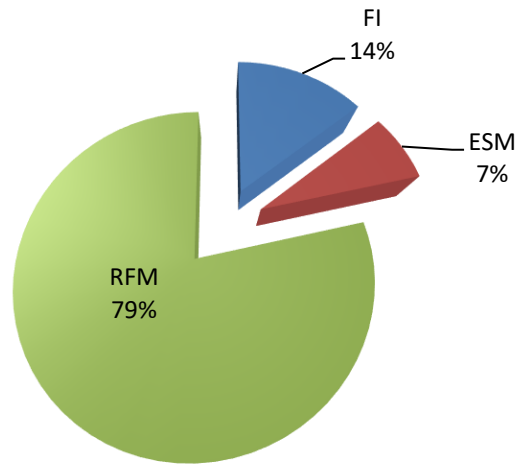
Region	Project Proposals				Pre-project Proposals				Total
	RFM	FI	ESM	Total	RFM	FI	ESM	Total	
<i>Americas</i>	2	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	3
<i>Asia Pacific</i>	4	1	-	5	-	-	-	-	5
<i>Africa</i>	2	-	-	2	3	1	-	4	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>--</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>14</b>

RFM = Reforestation and Forest Management  
 FI = Forest Industry  
 ESM = Economics, Statistics and Markets



**Decisions of the 56<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel on Project and Pre-project Proposals by Committee Area**

Category	Committee			Total
	RFM	FI	ESM	
<i>Projects</i>				
1	1	1	-	<b>2</b>
2	7	-	-	<b>7</b>
3	-	-	-	-
4	-	-	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>1</b>	-	<b>9</b>
<i>Pre-projects</i>				
1	2	1	-	<b>3</b>
2	-	-	-	-
4	1	-	1	<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>5</b>



**Decisions of the 56<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel on Project and Pre-project Proposals by Submitting Country**

Country	Category				Total
	1	2	3	4	
Benin	(3)	2	-	(1)	(4)+2
Colombia	1	1	-	-	2
Indonesia	-	2	-	-	2
CAF(Colombia/Ecuador/Mexico/Panama/Paraguay)	-	-	-	(1)	(1)
Thailand	-	2	-	-	2
Vietnam	1	-	-	-	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>(3)+2</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(2)</b>	<b>(5)+9</b>

Note: Parenthesis indicates pre-project.

## APPENDIX I

### TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE EXPERT PANEL FOR THE TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF ITTO PROJECT PROPOSALS

The Panel shall:

- (i) Assess new Project and Pre-project Proposals submitted to the organization. The recommendations for amendments to these proposals shall be made by the Expert Panel exclusively for the purpose of ensuring their technical soundness;
- (ii) Screen the Project Proposals for their relevance to ITTO's Action Plan and Work Programs (in the areas of Economics, Statistics and Markets, Reforestation and Forest Management, and Forest Industry), and consistency with ITTO decisions and policy guidelines, but not otherwise prioritize them;
- (iii) Where reformulation involving major amendments is recommended, request to carry out a final appraisal of the revised versions of Project and Pre-project Proposals, prior to their presentation to the relevant ITTO Committees;
- (iv) Report on the results of the technical assessment of Project and Pre-project Proposals to the submitting governments and to the ITTO Council and Committees, through the ITTO Secretariat;
- (v) The Expert Panel shall take into consideration previous Expert Panels' reports.

The Expert Panel, in assessing Projects and Pre-projects, shall also take into account:

- (a) their relevance to the objectives of the ITTA, 2006 and the requirement that a Project or Pre-project should contribute to the achievement of one or more of the Agreement objectives;
- (b) their environmental and social effects;
- (c) their economic effects;
- (d) their cost effectiveness;
- (e) the need to avoid duplication of efforts;
- (f) if applicable, their relationship and integration with ITTO policy work and their consistency with the ITTO Action Plan 2013-2018 including:
  - Guidelines for the Establishment and Sustainable Management of Planted Tropical Production Forests, 1993;
  - ITTO Guidelines on Fire Management in Tropical Forests, 1996;
  - ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics, 2020;
  - ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests, 2009; and
  - Voluntary Guidelines for the Sustainable Management of Natural Tropical Forests, 2015.

## APPENDIX II

### **Rating Categories of the ITTO System for Technical Appraisal of Project and Pre-project Proposals**

#### **Rating schedule for Project Proposals**

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.

Category 3: The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a Pre-project Proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the Pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the Project Proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee (e.g. complete reformulation is necessary; in case of rev.2 Project Proposals; Project not relevant; Project with insufficient information, etc.).

#### **Rating schedule for Pre-project Proposals**

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with the incorporation of amendments.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that the Pre-project Proposal is not commended to the Committee. The proposal is submitted with the recommendation not to approve the Pre-project Proposal.



**APPENDIX III**  
**List of Project and Pre-project Proposals reviewed by the**  
**Fifty-sixth Expert Panel**

<b>Project No.</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Country</b>	<b>Category</b>
PD 909/20 Rev.1 (F)	Develop Procedures for the Estimation of Net Volume of Standing Trees to Support Sustainable Management of Thailand's Forest Plantations	Thailand	2
PD 914/20 Rev.1 (F)	Towards Southeast Asian Sustainable Coastal Forest Management by Good Biodiversity Restoration Practices and Empowering Women (EWE) in Decision Support Systems	Thailand	2
PD 915/21 (F)	Strengthening the Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests in Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin	Benin	2
PD 916/21 (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	1
PD 917/21 (F)	Understanding Phytoplasma and Fungal Pathogens from Andean Oak, Pines and Eucalyptus to Sustain Natural Regenerating and Commercial Forests in Colombia	Colombia	2
PD 919/21 (F)	Enhancing Productivity and Protecting Genetic of Matoa ( <i>Pometia</i> sp.) (Indonesia)	Indonesia	2
PD 920/21 (F)	Strengthening the Sustainability of Teak ( <i>Tectona Grandis</i> ) Plantation through Increasing Stand Productivity and Conserving Genetic Resource in Muna Island, Southern Sulawesi, Indonesia	Indonesia	2
PD 921/21 (F)	Support for the Conservation and Promotion of Forest Tree Seeds in Benin	Benin	2
PPD 198/21 (F)	Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin	Benin	1
PPD 201/21 (F)	Study for Capacity Building of Private and Community Tree Farmers in Benin	Benin	1
PPD 202/21 (F)	Conservation of <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> Poir in Benin	Benin	4
PD 922/21 (I)	Promotion of Sustainable Domestic Wood Consumption in Vietnam	Vietnam	1
PPD 200/21 (I)	Capacity-Building of Woodworking Artisans in Southern Benin	Benin	1
PPD 199/21 (M)	Strengthening the Competitiveness and Sustainability of the Forest Value Chain through Eco-Efficiency (CAF/Colombia/Ecuador/Mexico/Panama/Paraguay)	CAF/Colombia/ Ecuador/ Mexico/ Panama/ Paraguay	4

## APPENDIX IV

### MEMBERSHIP OF THE FIFTY-SIXTH MEETING OF THE EXPERT PANEL FOR TECHNICAL APPRAISAL OF PROJECT PROPOSALS Virtual review, June/July 2021

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APPENDIX V

Revised Scoring Table – ITTO Project Proposal (PD)

Weighted Scoring System								
1.	Project relevance, origin and expected outcomes (15)			Mark	Score	Threshold		
1.	1.	<b>Relevance</b>						
1.	1.	1.	<i>Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities (1.2.1)</i>				Y	
1.	1.	2.	<i>Relevance to the submitting country's policies (1.2.2)</i>				Y	
1.	2.	<b>Origin (1.1)</b>				5		
1.	3.	<b>Geogr. location (1.3.1)+ Social, cultural and environ. aspects (1.3.2)</b>				5		
1.	4.	<b>Expected outcomes at project completion (1.4)</b>				5		
2.	<b>Project identification process (25)</b>							
2.	1.	<b>Institutional set up and organisational issues (4.1. + 2.1.1)</b>				5		
2.	2.	<b>Stakeholders</b>				10	Y	6
2.	2.	1.	<i>Stakeholder analysis (2.1.2)</i>		5			
2.	2.	2.	<i>Stakeholders involved at inception (2.1.3.) &amp; implementation (4.1.4.)</i>		5			
2.	3.	<b>Problem analysis (2.1.3)</b>				10	Y	6
2.	3.	1.	<i>Problem identification</i>		5			
2.	3.	2.	<i>Problem tree</i>		5			
3.	<b>Project design (45)</b>							
3.	1.	<b>Logical framework matrix (2.1.4)</b>				20	Y	13
3.	1.	1.	<i>Objectives (2.2)</i>		5			
3.	1.	2.	<i>Outputs (3.1.1)</i>		5			
3.	1.	3	<i>Indicators &amp; means of verification (columns 2 and 3 of the LogFrame)</i>		5			
3.	1.	4	<i>Assumptions and risks (3.5.1)</i>		5			
3.	2.	<b>Implementation</b>				20	Y	13
3.	2.	1.	<i>Activities (3.1.2)</i>		5			
3.	2.	2	<i>Strategy (approaches and methods, 3.2)</i>		5			
3.	2.	3	<i>Work plan (3.3)</i>		5			
3.	2.	4	<i>Budget (3.4)</i>		5			
3.	3.	<b>Sustainability (3.5.2)</b>				5	Y	3
4.	<b>Implementation arrangements (15)</b>							
4.	1.	<b>Project's management (EA - 4.1.1, Key staff - 4.1.2, SC - 4.1.3)</b>				5	Y	3
4.	2.	<b>Reporting, review, monitoring and evaluation (4.2)</b>				5		
4.	3.	<b>Dissemination and mainstreaming of project learning (4.3)</b>				5		
<b>Entire project proposal (100)</b>					<b>100,0%</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>75%</b>	
<b>Category</b>					<b>1</b>			

Marks indicate:

- 0 - Information is completely missing
- 1 - Very poor: some elements are there but the essential ones are missing
- 2 - Poor: essential elements are incomplete, insufficient, wrong or misunderstood
- 3 - Moderate: essential elements are available but unclear or inaccurate
- 4 - Good: clear, accurate and informative
- 5 - Excellent: clear, accurate, informative and comprehensive (perfectly integrated with other items)

**Rating categories:**

Category 1:	The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.
Category 2:	The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee.
Category 3:	The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a Pre-project Proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal.
Category 4:	The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the Project Proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

Revised Scoring Table – ITTO PRE-PROJECT PROPOSALS (PPD)

Weighted Scoring System							
1.	PRE-PROJECT CONTEXT (5)			Mark	Score	Threshold	
1.	1.		Origin and justification		5		
1.	2.		Relevance				
1.	2.	1.	Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities			Y	
1.	2.	2.	Relevance to the submitting Country's policies			Y	
2.	JUSTIFICATION OF PRE-PROJECT (15)						
2.	1.		Objectives		15	Y	9
2.	1.	1.	Development objective	5			
2.	1.	2.	Specific objective	5			
2.	2.		Preliminary problem identification	5			
3.	PRE-PROJECT INTERVENTIONS (25)						
3.			Outputs and activities		10	Y	7
3.	1.		Outputs	5			
3.	2.		Activities, inputs and unit costs	5			
3.	3.		Approaches and methods		5		
3.	4.		Work plan		5		
3.	5.		Budget		5		
4.	IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS (15)						
4.	1.		Executing agency and organizational structure		5		
4.	2.		Pre-Project Management		5		
4.	3.		Monitoring and reporting		5		
<b>Entire project proposal (60)</b>					<b>100,0%</b>	<b>Y</b>	<b>75%</b>
<b>Category</b>					<b>1</b>		

Marks indicate:

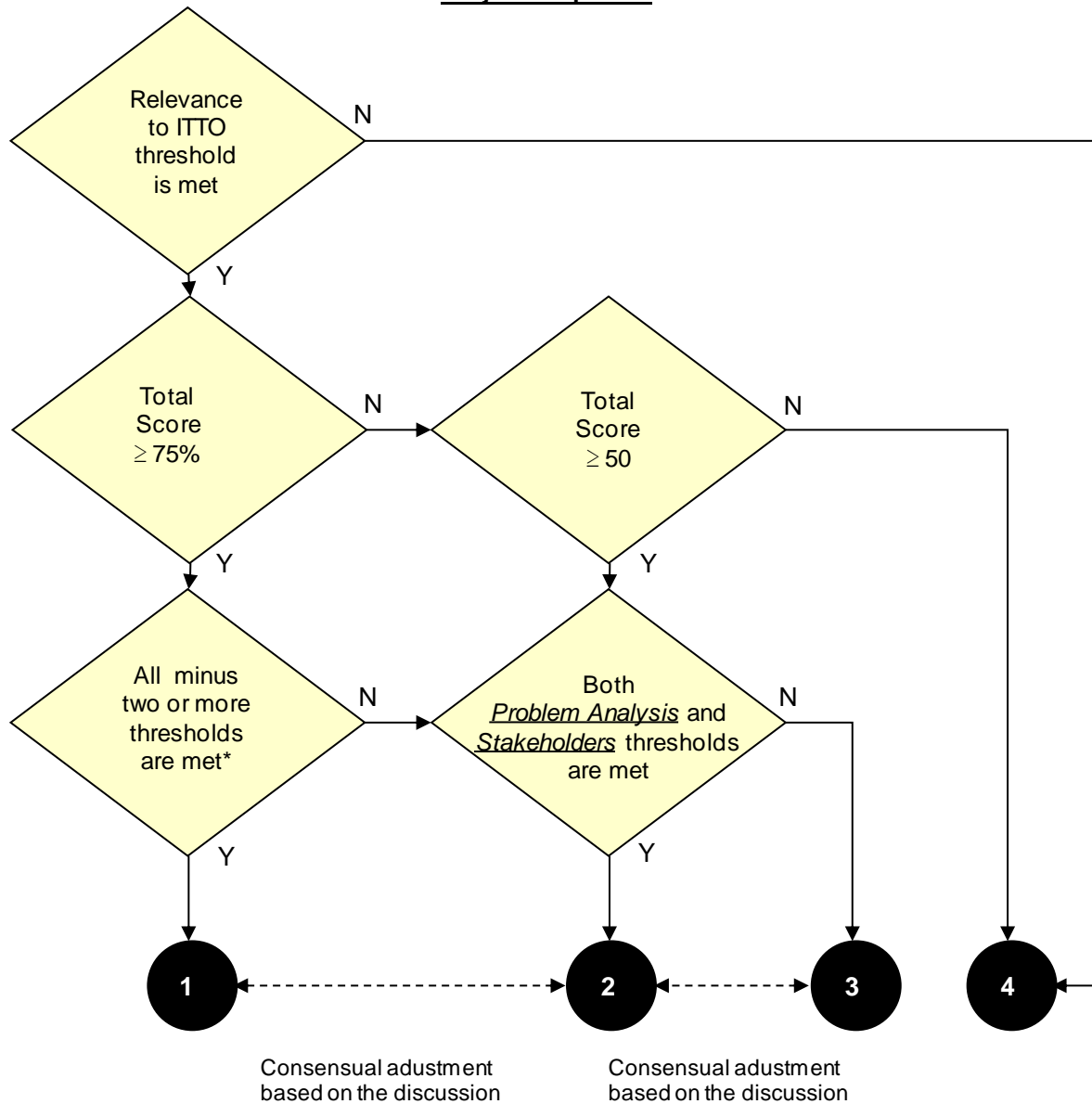
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**Appendix VI**  
**Flow charts for deciding categories in the scoring system**

**Project Proposals**

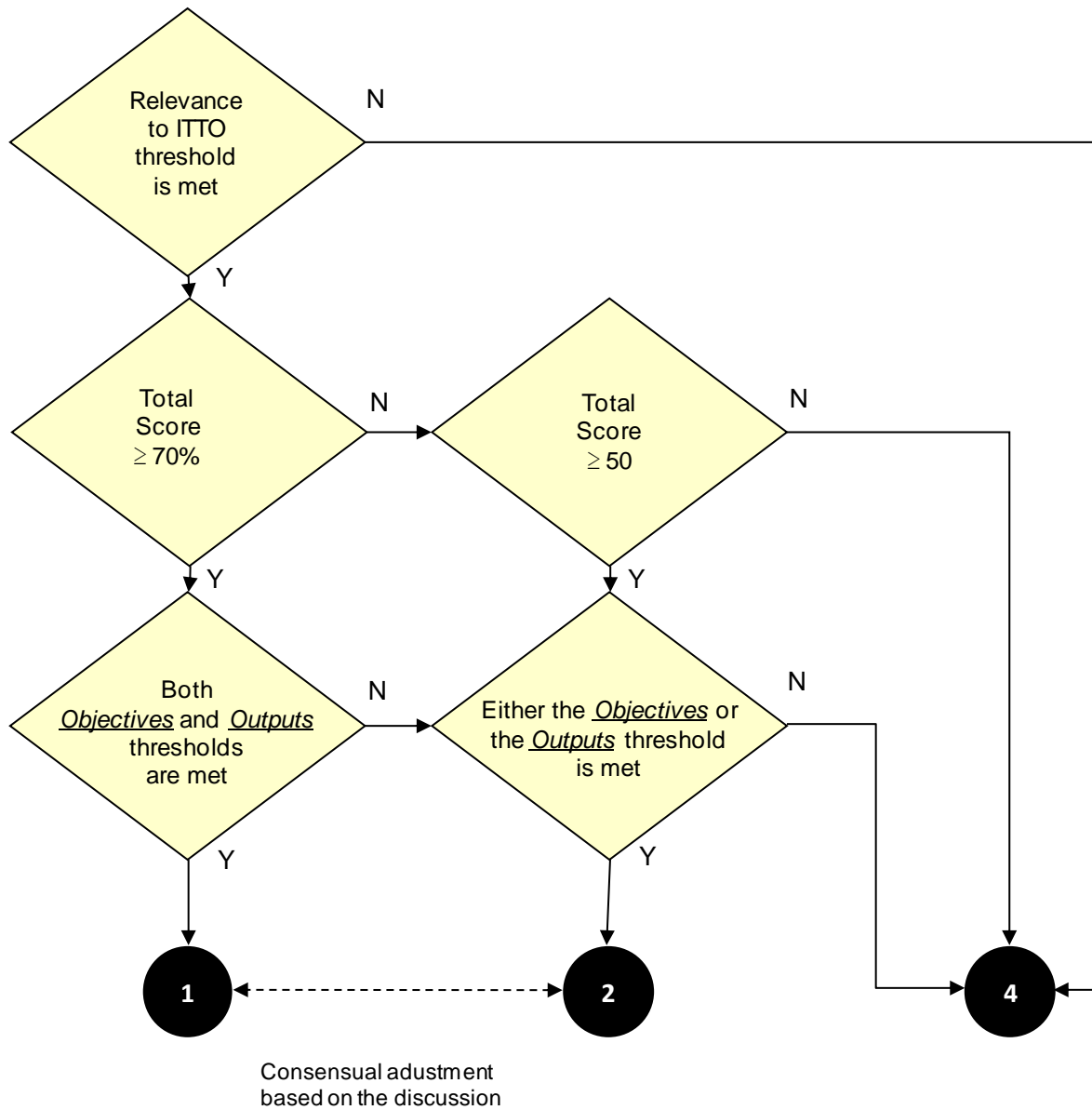


\*Thresholds failed cannot be any two among the following three:

- Stakeholder
- Logical Framework
- Sustainability

- Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments. Proposal commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments if any.
- Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee. Proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent.
- Category 3: The Panel concluded that the proposal is not accepted because a pre-project proposal is required. According to the indication of the Panel the pre-project shall (a) be submitted to the Expert Panel for appraisal or (b) could be directly submitted to the Committee for appraisal. Proposal is missing fundamental information, consequently a pre-project is required and to be submitted to the EP.
- Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee. Proposal not recommended but submitted to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal, (a) either because a complete reformulation is necessary, or (b) because it's not relevant to ITTO. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

**Pre-Project Proposals**



Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments. Proposal commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments if any.

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised proposal before it can commend it to the Committee. Proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent.

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee. Proposal not recommended but submitted to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the project proposal, (a) either because a complete reformulation is necessary, or (b) because it's not relevant to ITTO. Justification should be given to the proponent and the Committee.

## **Annex**

**Assessment, recommendation and conclusion by the Fifty-sixth Expert Panel on  
each Project and Pre-project Proposal**



Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized the relevance of the proposal to support research to develop procedures for the estimation of net volume of standing trees in plantation forests in Thailand. The Panel noted that in the revised proposal, efforts have been made to address the recommendations made by the 55<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel.

However, the Panel noted that it is not clear why the conversion factor from gross to net volume per species is not determined at sawmills after harvest, being this the most simple and cost-effective way to do so (proper log grading could also assist in determining net volumes). Moreover, it is expected that the forest plantation industry (both private and public) carries out this basic research, as it is in their best interest. In the revised proposal it appears that the REAL PROBLEM lies in the current calculation of stumpage fees and/or royalties charged by FIO to the detriment of private harvesters or vice-versa, if the sawmills are under-estimating the net volumes of harvested timber, thus underpaying FIO. In any case, charging stumpage fees and/or royalties of harvested timber from plantations is not a common practice worldwide as these are only charged on timber logged from natural forests. Does Thailand charge these to private/public timber plantation investors based on the volume harvested? This needs to be properly clarified in the proposal.

Furthermore, the Panel noted that there are still several sections for further improvements in the revised proposal according to the guide of the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation. In this light, the Panel considered that the proposal should be revised so as to incorporate the recommendations detailed as below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Provide a map and tables indicating the location of plantations, the areas these cover and the age groups in Section 1.3.1 (Geographic location). It should indicate whether the rubber trees were planted for rubber or timber production;
2. Improve Section 1.4 (Expected outcomes at project completion) by elaborating how the outcomes will improve the productivity of the plantations, including on how these will reduce the actual decay affecting the trees in the current plantations;
3. Specify tertiary stakeholders according to the guide of the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation in Section 2.1.2 (Stakeholder analysis). It should avoid indicating the category of a stakeholder group in the column "involvement in the project" in the stakeholder analysis table;
4. The key problem in Section 2.1.3 (Problem analysis) must be properly identified. It appears that this is due to the current calculation of stumpage fees and/or royalties charged by FIO to the detriment of private harvesters or vice-versa, the sawmills are under-estimating the net volumes of harvested timber, thus underpaying FIO. In any case, charging stumpage fees and/or royalties of harvested timber from plantations is not a common practice worldwide (these are only charged on timber logged from natural forests) and should be clarified;
5. Improve the problem tree. It should focus on the real problem and underlying causes. If one wants to determine the net timber volume from gross standing volume the best way to do so is by developing decay discount formulas (log scaling/grading rules) or by developing conversion factors which are easy to create. This can be done at the sawmills. All that is needed is to calculate the volume of the harvested roundwood and then measure the net volume of timber obtained at the sawmill and based on these two figures, establish a conversion factor to establish appropriate stumpage fees or royalties. Follow the instructions specified in the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation;
6. Improve Section 2.1.4 (Logical framework matrix Logical framework matrix) by using SMART (specific, attainable, measurable, realistic and time bound) indicators. It is also necessary to mention the means of verification that can be applied at the field level, in the plantations themselves;
7. Improve Section 2.2.1 (Development objective and impact indicators) by focusing on the project's main intervention under the ITTO mandate. Promoting rubber plantations is not a high priority of ITTO. It is not clear why the main impact outcome would be the number of timber management plans by FIO and other agencies in Thailand using the new volume equations, unless it is related to stumpage fees and royalties to

be paid. The outcome indicators and outputs should focus on increasing the productivity of timber plantations in Thailand;

8. Refine the implementation approaches and methods (Section 3.2). The project proposal mentions "the intent is to produce plantation-specific net volume conversion factors for standing trees, for estimating what is expected to be produced. Use of factors developed from sawmills after harvest would not be appropriate". It is not clear why not, as this would be the most exact way to determine % of decay in standing timber. In any case, if gross and net standing tree volume is needed, then it only needs samples of trees at harvest age;
9. Outputs should be focused on improving growth/ha and enhancing timber quality in plantations;
10. Improve Section 3.1.2 (Activities) and Section 3.3 (Work plan) since some activities (1.3, 1.4, 2.2, etc.) may need longer time than planned. Include a responsible party column in the work plan as per the ITTO project formulation manual;
11. Correct the amount of the ITTO contribution in Project Brief. Consider including the private sector's financial contribution while reducing the ITTO budget as it continues to be very high even though requested to be more equitably distributed among interested institutions. Delete Table 10 (Overall project budget) on page 26 as long as Table 6 (Master Budget Table) provides the same information;
12. Improve Table 3.4.4 (Executing Agency Budget by Component) by providing detailed separate component tables for the counterpart contributions from Kaserkart University, Royal Forest Department and private plantation associations;
13. Consider ITTO monitoring cost of \$10,000, Ex-post evaluation of \$10,000 in Table 3.4.3 (ITTO Budget by Component);
14. Provide more realistic assumptions and risks. Correct "teach" with "teak" in Section 3.5.1 (Assumptions and risks);
15. Address medium and long-term sustainability in improving the estimation of standing volumes; and
16. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal

ESIA Category C

Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized the relevance of the project to support the restoration of degraded mangrove forests and the sustainable management of restored mangrove forests through empowerment of women in Thailand, Cambodia, and Myanmar as a regional project, which is a concept that ITTO favors. The Panel noted that the revised proposal has additional information that helped to clarify many of the questions and concerns raised in the 55<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel. Some of the technical elements of the project are sound, while the socio-economic and governance/policy elements are less so.

However, the Panel noted that fundamental questions remain: how will the project deal with existing drivers of mangrove forest loss and degradation and how will women enjoy greater empowerment apart from their involvement in local committees and consultations? While gender is in the title of the proposal, it seems an aftermath consideration. Assessing the cause of mangrove degradation and or how they will work with communities to address this degradation is an important first step in restoration. How and how often will the Executing Agency engage the communities? What restoration methods will they assess and how?

Without measures to address the underlying economic drivers of ongoing mangrove forest loss and degradation, the ability to reach the project's goals will be difficult. For example: How will pressures to continue and expand shrimp culture be brought under control? Since fuelwood collection, particularly for domestic and small-scale local use, is a main direct driver of forest loss and degradation, what measures are proposed by the project, or envisioned by the many government actors in Thailand, Myanmar and Cambodia, to reduce this dependence on wood fuels?

Regarding the ITTO budget, the Panel noted that it is very high and one of the largest budget items is the cost of drones. There is a lot of travel in the budget, which could be reduced by relying on local partners in the government and universities. The budget support of the French staff is also quite high.

Overall, the Panel was again of the view that the proposal should be modified and revised so as to incorporate the recommendations detailed below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Provide brief information on level of coordination and communication among the institutions in the 3 countries in Section 2.1.1 (Institutional set up and organizational issues);
2. Further improve Section 2.1.3 (Problem analysis) or other relevant Sessions by addressing the fundamental questions raised in the overall assessment related to further analysis of the direct causes of mangrove forest loss and degradation; effective empowerment of women in project implementation; restoration method; and measures to reduce the dependence of local communities on wood fuels;
3. Further refine the indicators; to the extent possible use SMART indicators in Section 2.1.4 (Logical framework matrix);
4. Use measurable impact indicators. Number of strategic plans to be developed, increase in forest cover for instance are quantifiable in Sections 2.2.1 (Development objective and impact indicators) and 2.2.2 (Specific objective and outcome indicators);
5. Further improve the design of project activities, taking into account the following:
  - a) Activity 1.1 (field assessment design) is sound, but which fauna will they sample?
  - b) Activity 1.2 – how will the project document changes in diversity with remote sensing over this time period?
  - c) Activity 1.3-- is valuable, but difficult to conduct.
  - d) Activity 2.1 – is an interesting approach, but should include topography, land tenure, the actual cause of degradation, and community involvement.

- e) Activity 2.2. –would be useful to virtually test out scenarios to predict restoration success. Does the project plan for flooding maps that can be used to predict the hydro geomorphological conditions of the site?
  6. Improve the presentation of the workplan in accordance with the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation;
  7. Readjust the ITTO budget in accordance with the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and also in the following way:
    - a) Scale down the ITTO budget especially the travelling costs and the budget support of the French staff while increasing in-kind contribution of the EA for consumables, utilities, office space, local transport and miscellaneous Section 3.4.4 (Executing Agency Budget by Component)
    - b) Justify the purchase of drones
    - c) Improve the presentation of Tables 3.4.1, 3.4.2 and 3.4.3 in accordance with the ITTO Manual
    - d) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component 83) based on the reduced budget so as to conform with the standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO project costs;
  8. Improve Section 3.5.1 (Assumptions and risks) by Identifying potential risks associated with the assumptions made and defining risk mitigating measures accordingly. Sections 3.5.1 and 2.1.4 must be consistent with each other;
  9. Clarify which main activities will continue after project completion, responsible parties for execution and funding sources in Section 3.5.2 (Sustainability);
  10. Provide a short profile of KMUTT detailing its competence, own resources, networking, and funding sources in Section 4.1.4 (Executing Agency and Partners). Update the contact information of some of the collaborating entities (especially in Cambodia Ministry of Environment);
  11. Provide the following missing Annexes in accordance with the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation:
    - a) Profiles of the Executing and Collaborating Agencies
    - b) Tasks and responsibilities of key experts provided by the executing agency
    - c) ToRs of personnel, consultants and sub-contracts funded by ITTO; and
  12. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.
- C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal.

ITTO project environmental and social management impact (ESM) assessment screening: Category C

**PD 915/21 (F) Strengthening the rehabilitation and sustainable management of Sacred Forests in Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin**

Assessment by the Fifty-Sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The importance of this project was acknowledged by the Panel for its main goal for the restoration and sustainable management of Sacred Forests (SFs) within Ramsar Sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin, in order to strengthen and consolidate the achievements of the previous completed project PD 754/Rev.3 (F). The panel noted that this proposal is a follow-up to PD 754/14 Rev.3 (F) project titled "*Rehabilitation and Sustainable Management of Sacred Forests on Ramsar sites 1017 and 1018 in Benin*". However, its outcomes remain fragile and require improvements and consolidation actions as the various processes initiated in connection with sustainable management tools, increasing the income of beneficiaries and integrating SFs into the Municipality Protected Area System were not fully completed. In this context, a new project proposal for the restoration and sustainable management of sacred forests was developed to strengthen and consolidate the previous project's achievements, and to go beyond the pilot implementation stage of several project activities and move towards the completion of major achievements necessary for the valorization and sustainability of SFs.

The Panel also noted that the project proposal contained several weaknesses in the sections and sub-sections dealing with: **(1)** no reference in Sub-section 1.2.1 to the ITTO Guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics (PS-24); **(2)** only an out-of-date basic small scale map of 2009 without coordinates is provided while the Ramsar site boundaries have been vastly extended in 2018; **(3)** the analysis in Sub-sections 1.3.2 and 1.3.3 does not refer to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23) and social aspects are very succinct and not clear as regards the current land tenure conflicts between SFs and farmers/fuelwood gatherers; **(4)** the problem analysis gives the impression that the previous project did not achieve its expected outcomes and while land tenure conflicts are mentioned between SFs and farmers, the proposal appears to favor the SFs in detriment of the farmers; **(5)** the problem focuses only the inefficient management of the SFs but not on the lack of livelihoods of the neighboring farmers; **(6)** the logical framework matrix could provide more detailed qualitative and quantitative SMART Measurable Indicators and Means of Verification; **(7)** the development objective is acceptable but its Indicators should be SMART; **(8)** the specific objective is clear, but while the proposal's main focus is the restoration of forest landscapes there is no reference made to the ITTO Guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics; **(9)** in some sections 4 outputs are mentioned, in others only 3, in contradiction with the problem tree and objective tree; **(10)** the numbering of Activity 2.2 and Activity 2.3 as listed in Sub-section 3.2.1 is reversed in the Section 3.3 (Work Plan) and in Sub-section 3.4.1 (Master Budget Schedule); **(11)** although this proposal is planning to strengthen and consolidate some achievements of the completed project PD 754/14 Rev.3 (F), it is not a Phase 2. In any case, none of the two projects were mentioned as Phases in their titles. Moreover, in the Sub-section 3.2.1 of the proposal it mentions that the current project will be implemented in 3 Stages, but no description/clarification is provided. The resolution of land tenure conflicts is also not clearly described in the same sub-section; **(12)** the Master Budget mentions outputs, activities and sub-activities that are not mentioned in the Section 3.1 and Section 3.2, and there are inconsistencies in several parts of the budget by components and by sources (ITTO and counterpart); while the Component 20 Subcontracts and 60 Miscellaneous make up for 70% of the ITTO budget, several of the budget items are not clearly described and justified (budget items and sub-items 216.3, 216.4, 226, 624.1, 624.2, 633, 634, 635, etc.); **(13)** lack of consistency between the Sub-section 3.5.2 (sustainability) and Sub-section 2.1.3 (logical framework matrix) in which it is mentioned that sustainability will only be achieved by 2030 and not upon project completion, while land conflict is not mentioned in this Sub-section; **(14)** it is not clear why the Benin Environmental Agency is not included as a collaborating agency, seeing that it is responsible for the management of the two Ramsar Sites; **(15)** lack of consistency between Annex 2 and Annex 4, as it is not clear if the permanent CESAREN project team is composed of only the Project manager, as per the CESAREN counterpart budget; **(16)** the technical reports to be produced by the project are not clearly identified in relation to the Work Plan and Budget Tables; **(17)** while some mechanisms are mentioned, the overall communication strategy is still lacking as regards focusing on its main stakeholders (SF managers and surrounding subsistence farmers); **(18)** No description on how the project's results will be mainstreamed into national policies and plans regarding the RAMSAR sites, nor the Mono Biosphere Reserve and others; **(19)** the profile of the collaborating agency DGEFC is missing; **(20)** the CV of the project manager is lacking, as well as the CV of the project coordinator and monitoring and evaluation assistant, to be provided by the implementing agency and paid by ITTO budget; **(21)** the description of TORs does not follow the structure included in the ITTO Manual (page 68, French version) for consultants and experts, and TORs are required for all consultants and experts mentioned under budget components 20 and 60.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Describe in Section 1.1 (Origin) the problems that give rise to the land tenure conflicts between SFs and subsistence farmers and mitigation efforts carried out to date, and indicate what local authorities oversee the Ramsar sites and the overlapping Mono UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.
2. Improve Sub-section 1.2.1 (conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities) by including a reference on the ITTO Guidelines for forest landscape restoration in the tropics (PS-24).
3. Improve Sub-section 1.2.2 (Relevance to Benin's policies) by referring to all the other projects implemented in the Ramsar sites and SFs in Benin.
4. Provide a larger scale updated map and other thematic maps of the RAMSAR sites and the coordinates of the SFs, for geographical location, and add as an annex a list of the 40 or 50 SFs indicating the area in ha, potential beneficiaries, and other relevant information.
5. Improve Sub-section 1.3.2 (Social, cultural, economic, and environmental aspects) with an in-depth analysis referring to the relevant elements provided in the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23).
6. Amend the Section 1.4 (Expected outcomes at project completion) by providing relevant qualitative and quantitative technical details while making sure to be consistent with the outcome indicators of the specific objective, which should not be too ambitious in relation to the project duration.
7. Re-visit the problem analysis by providing a more balanced approach considering the land tenure conflicts between SFs and farmers, while making sure to avoid favoring the SFs to the detriment of the farmers.
8. Readjust the problem tree and related objective tree in correlation with the re-visited problem analysis for consistency in accordance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
9. Re-visit the logical framework matrix in correlation with the re-visited problem analysis and related problem tree and objective tree, while complying with the requirements provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation (such as SMART indicators with time-bound not beyond the project duration), and include all the technical reports to be produced under the means of verification.
10. Improve the impact indicators of the development objective and the outcome indicators of the specific objective while complying with the requirements provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation.
11. Delete Output 4 in all sections and sub-sections of the proposal, as it is not derived from the problem tree and related solution tree.
12. Make sure the numbering of activities in the Sub-section 3.1.2 (Activities) is similar in the Section 3.3 (Work plan) and Sub-section 3.4.1 (Master budget schedule).
13. Delete the reference to Phases and Stages because Phase 1 was not mentioned in the title of the completed project PD 754/14 Rev.3 (F) and improve the Section 3.2 (implementation approaches and methods) with elements regarding land tenure conflicts which could impact the project implementation.
14. Improve the Section 3.5.1 (assumptions and risks) and Section 3.5.2 (sustainability) to be consistent with the elements described in the assumptions of the re-visited logical framework matrix and the improved Section 3.2 (implementation approaches and methods), in accordance with the structure and requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
15. Consider adding the Beninese Environmental Agency (ABE) as a collaborating agency because ABE is the main authority as regards the management of Ramsar sites and amend the Sub-section 4.1.1 accordingly.
16. Clarify if the permanent CESAREN project team is composed of only the Project manager, as per the CESAREN counterpart budget, or if it includes those mentioned Annex 4.
17. Include the list of technical reports to be produced by the project in the Sub-section 4.2.3.

18. Further describe the communication strategy and methods of the project team and how the project results and learning will be made useful to users in the Sub-section 4.3.1 and describe how the project results will be mainstreamed into national policies in the Sub-section 4.3.2, as per the ITTO Manual for project formulation.
  19. Add as annexes, the profile of collaborating agencies (DGEFC and ABE), the 1-page CV of the project coordinator and monitoring and evaluation assistant, the TORs following the structure included in the ITTO Manual (page 68, French version) for consultants and experts mentioned under budget lines 20 and 60.
  20. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment **and** specific recommendations, and also in the following way:
    - a) Reduce the ITTO budget by focusing on 40 SFs, instead of 50 SFs, for strengthening and consolidating the achievements of PD 754/14 Rev.3 (F),
    - b) Delete the expenditures budgeted for vehicle vehicle maintenance and fuel costs, because the purchasing of a vehicle and a motorcycle is not budgeted in the ITTO contribution, or include these as counterpart contributions,
    - c) Review and reduce substantially the budget items under Component 20 (subcontracts) and Component 60 (miscellaneous) and keep only those adequately justified in the Sub-section 3.2 (implementation approaches and methods) and with appropriate TORs to be added as annexes,
    - d) Add the budget item 81 with the standard rate of US\$10,000.00 per year for the monitoring and review costs (US\$30,000 for 3 years) of a project implemented in Africa and the budget item 83 with the standard rate of US\$15,000 for ex-post evaluation costs,
    - e) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of **12%** of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and
  21. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.
- C) Conclusion

**Category 2:** The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal. **ESIA Category B.**

PD 916/21 (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**

Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized the importance of this proposal intending to launch a participatory process with a gender focus to achieve sustainable management of secondary natural forests and collective lands in Bajo Calima, Republic of Colombia. The proposal focuses on sustainably managed timber plantations utilizing agroforestry systems that incentivize the people living in the area to make a legal living and enhance the local food chain. The Panel noted that the rationale, objectives, and goals of the project are well defined and conform closely with ITTO objectives and priorities. The technical elements of the project appear to be sound, and likely to yield significant benefits in terms of livelihoods, as well as reductions in deforestation and forest degradation in the region. It also noted that the information and detailed analysis provided regarding the communities and the governance structures in the areas in which this project is to be implemented is well described. The history of collaboration in forest management and agroforestry development between the communities and project collaborators – especially the University of Tolima - is apparent in the proposal and builds upon a past ITTO project. This past work creates trust among the participants, which is essential.

However, the Panel further noted that there was still a need for improvement of some sections and sub-sections of the revised project proposal dealing with: ITTO objectives, geographical location not described in details for the target project sites, social and environmental aspects not referring to the relevant elements of the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23), impact indicators for the development objective with indicated time-bound beyond the project duration, ITTO budget for project personnel representing around 35% of total amount to be disbursed to the executing agency for project implementation purpose, which are subject to specific recommendations, here below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the Sub-section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities) by fully quoting the ITTO objectives to be followed by related explanation, while reducing the number of ITTO objectives to the most relevant ones in correlation with the outcomes of the specific objective.
2. Improve the Sub-section 1.3.1 (Geographical location) with appropriate description of the project target sites to be clearly indicated in a map to be added in this Sub-section.
3. Re-visit the Sub-section 1.3.2 (Social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects) with relevant elements of the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23).
4. Make the outcome indicators of the specific objective SMART (as required in the ITTO manual for project implementation, on page xx in the Spanish version) by using the time-bound within the project duration.
5. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment **and** specific recommendations, and also in the following way:
  - a) Reduce substantially the ITTO budget for project personnel by equitably sharing the costs between the implementing agency and ITTO, as a way to contribute to the project sustainability after its completion with external funds provided by ITTO,
  - b) Delete the second column (source) in the table of Master budget and avoid the calculation mistake such as the one made on budget line 111 of ITTO budget table,
  - c) Adjust the budget item 81 with the standard rate of US\$10,000.00 per year for the monitoring and review costs (US\$20,000 for 2 years) of a project implemented in Latin America and the budget item 83 with the standard rate of US\$15,000 for ex-post evaluation costs,
  - d) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of **12%** of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and
6. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.



C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

PD 917/21 (F)

**Understanding Phytoplasma and Fungal Pathogens from Andean Oak, Pines and Eucalyptus to Sustain Natural Regenerating and Commercial Forests in Colombia**

Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the project aims to study the potential fungal and phytoplasma diseases of Andean oak (*Quercus humboldtii*) and phytoplasmas in eucalyptus and pine plantations to support the development of sustainable management strategies for commercial plantations in Colombia. It also acknowledged that the project proposal has brought together many partners, including academia, the private sector, environmental research institutes, and forest plantation communities.

However, the Panel noted that there is a critical weakness in the presentation of the problem analysis and its subsequent logical framework matrix. The key problem to be addressed by the project was not well identified as it refers only to the need for additional guidelines while its four causes are not well matched with the key problem. The Panel observed that the key problem is more related to the lack or scarcity of knowledge and management strategies for fungal and phytoplasma diseases of selected commercial tree species. The eight Outputs presented in the logical framework matrix are not closely supported by the four causes identified in the problem tree and the four outputs of the objective tree. For instance, it is necessary to review the appropriateness of the presentation of Output 7 (one PhD and one MSc Students), as it is a single output. Similarly, the presentation of Output 8 (80% of the stakeholders surveyed) is not appropriate as it is more related to an indicator rather than an output. Similarly, Output 5 (60% stakeholder are aware and trained) is a performance indicator rather than an Output. It would be logical to combine Outputs 5,6,7 & 8 as most of these are indicators and relates to training and capacity development, hence a new modified Output 5.

Furthermore, the Panel noted that there are some weaknesses of the proposal. These weaknesses include: weak presentation of the logical framework matrix, as its outputs do not correspond to the causes of the key problem and the many of the indicators are not measurable; the problem analysis is presented without any discussions about the key problem to be addressed by the project, as well as its causes; limited presentation of measurable impact and outcome indicators; and weak presentation of Section 3.1.1 (Outputs).

Regarding the ITTO budget, the Panel observed there are several points that need to be addressed according to the guide of the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation.

In this light, the Panel considered that the proposal should be revised so as to incorporate the recommendations detailed as below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Refine Section 2.1.3 (Problem analysis) by focusing on a key problem which will be addressed by the project. Improve the identification of the causes of the key problem that can be presented as outputs of the objective tree as well as project's outputs in a consistent manner;
2. Improve the key elements of project intervention in the logical framework matrix based on the revised problem analysis and problem tree. Refine the presentation of indicators in a SMART (specific, measurable, appropriate, realistic and time-bound) way;
3. Improve Section 2.1 (Development objective and impact indicators) and Section 2.2 (Specific objective and outcome indicators). The development and specific objectives should be reformulated according to the revised problem analysis. Impact and outcome indicators should be presented with more measurable indicators in a concise manner;
4. Improve Section 3.1.1 (Outputs) based on the revised problem analysis and logical framework matrix. The number of PhD and MSc trained and the percentage of stakeholders surveyed and trained are not outputs. Improve the presentation of the activities, the approaches and methods of implementation, and the work plan following the revised Outputs;
5. Improve Table 3.4.3 (ITTO budget by component), taking into account the following:
  - a) Include an independent annual financial audit cost in Budget Item 60 (Miscellaneous) if it is not supported by the Executing Agency

- b) Eliminate the budget line 70 (National management cost), as it should be provided by the Executing Agency
  - c) Include an amount of US\$21,000 in budget line 81 (ITTO monitoring and review) to support ITTO's monitoring visits during the three-year implementation of the project
  - d) Include an amount of US\$15,000 in ITTO's ex-post evaluation to support an independent evaluation after project completion
  - e) Calculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component number 83) based on the standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO project costs
  - f) Based on the revised Table 3.4.3, budget Tables 3.4.1 (Master budget schedule), 3.4.2 (Consolidated budget by component) and 3.4.4 should be amended accordingly; and
6. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.
- C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal.

PD 919/21 (F)

**Enhancing Productivity and Protecting Genetic of Matoa (*Pometia sp.*)  
(Indonesia)**

Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the relevance of the project to support to the conservation of genetic resources and sustainable management of two Matoa species such as in Matoa buah (*Pometia pinnata*) and Matoa kayu (*Pometia coreaceae* and *Pometia acuminata*) to address their unsustainable use in the Papua islands, Indonesia.

However, the Panel noted that there are fundamental weaknesses in the formulation of key elements of the proposal such as stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, logical framework matrix and sustainability. In addition, there are several sections for further improvements in the proposal according to the guide of the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation. In this light, the Panel considered that the proposal should be revised so as to incorporate the recommendations detailed as below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the List of Abbreviations and Acronyms by providing additional key Abbreviations and Acronyms;
2. Provide a map to show clearly the project sites;
3. Improve Section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities) by elaborating the proposal's relevance to ITTO Strategic Action Plan #3 (Conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity);
4. Describe the intended situation after project completion in Section 1.4 (Expected outcomes at project completion). It should avoid repeating the statements of the outputs and activities and be consistent with presentation of the logical framework matrix;
5. Improve Section 2.1.2 (Stakeholder analysis) by dividing local communities into sub-groups based on their characteristics. It should provide an analysis for the status and role of women in local communities. Local governments should be added as a secondary stakeholder, because they are an important partner not only for project implementation but also for the sustainability once the project is finished;
6. Improve the problem tree in Section 2.1.3 (Problem analysis) by describing a key problem and its effects to support the objectives of the project. Identifying a key problem is the first step, and then the second step is to find its effects in the presentation of a problem tree;
7. Review the outputs and indicators in Section 2.1.4 (Logical framework matrix) in consistent with Section 3.1. Promote SMART (specific, attainable, measurable, realistic and time bound) indicators;
8. Provide measurable impact indicators in Section 2.2.1 (Development objective and impact indicators). The presentation line of the third outcome indicator in Section 2.2.2 (Specific objective and outcome indicators) should be corrected;
9. Make sure the consistent presentation of Outputs between Section 3.1.1 (Outputs) and the Logical Framework Matrix;
10. Provide a reference number for each of the activities to help identify them in Section 3.1.2 (Activities);
11. Elaborate the effective participation of key stakeholders, especially women in Section 3.2 (Implementation approaches and methods). Also elaborate the inclusive and participatory approaches of key stakeholder;
12. Present Outputs and Activities according to the logical framework matrix. Include Output 3 in the work plan. Since the proposed duration of "60 months" appears to be too long for appropriate management of the project, it is necessary to review the duration of around 3-years of implementation;
13. Elaborate sufficient political support and commitment, especially from local governments to extend or strengthen project work after project completion in Section 3.5.2 (Sustainability);
14. Include the participation of representatives of donors and local governments in PSC in Section 4.1.3 (Project Steering Committee);
15. Further elaborate the internal review system (how, where, when and the role of stakeholders, etc.) in Section 4.2 (Reporting, review, monitoring and evaluation);

16. Provide more specific descriptions of the dissemination of project results in Section 4.3.1 (Dissemination of project results). Enhance Section 4.3.2 (Mainstreaming project learning) by elaborating on the mainstreaming of the project results to the local governments, as they will support the livelihoods of local communities after project completion;
17. Provide more details of the task and responsibilities of key personnel in Annex 1 (Task and Responsibilities of key personnel). Provide missing Annexes 2 (Tasks and responsibilities of key experts provided by the executing agency) and 3 (ToRs of personnel, consultants and sub-contracts funded by ITTO) in accordance with the ITTO Manual for Project Formulation;
18. Improve the presentation of the project budget, taking into account the following:
  - a) Improve Table 3.4.1 (Master budget schedule) clearly indicating relevant costs to support the implementation of each activity
  - b) Justify the budget provision for the travel for monitoring (US\$140,000) in Table 3.4.2 (Consolidated budget by component) by).Check between the budget line and its category (e.g. Budget line 80. Project monitoring & administration). The presentation of the total budget amount should be consistent between the cover page and the budget table. Currently, US\$814,700 is presented on the cover page, while the budget table indicates US\$672,830 as the total budget.
  - c) Improve Table 3.4.3 (ITTO budget by component): Include an annual independent financial audit cost under Budget Item 60 (Miscellaneous) if it is not supported by the Executing Agency; Adjust the amount of the budget line 81 (ITTO monitoring and review) to an amount of US\$15,000 to support ITTO's monitoring visits during three year of project implementation; Adjust the amount of the ITTO's ex-post evaluation to US\$10,000 to support an independent evaluation after project completion; Calculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component 83) based on the standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO project costs.
  - d) Check the consistent presentation of the total amount of the Executing Agency's contribution between the cover page and Table 3.4.4 (Executing Agency Budget by Component). Currently, the Executing Agency's contribution is presented with US\$950 on the cover page, which is different from US\$20,500 in the Table 3.4.4.
  - e) Based on the revised Table 3.4.3, the presentation of Tables 3.4.1 (Master budget schedule), 3.4.2 (Consolidated budget by component) and 3.4.4 (Executing Agency Budget by Component) should be amended accordingly; and
19. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal

PD 920/21 (F)

**Strengthening the Sustainability of Teak (*Tectona Grandis*) Plantation through Increasing Stand Productivity and Conserving Genetic Resource in Muna Island, Southern Sulawesi, Indonesia**

Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the project aims at increasing the productivity of teak forests/plantations and the conservation of genetic resources of teak as teak forest resources have been reduced drastically, leading to the erosion of its genetic variability and the entire genetic resources of the species in the Muna Island, southeast Sulawesi, Indonesia.

However, the Panel noted that the project proposal is too unspecific concerning the tasks although the narration of the history of teak exploitation in Southern Sulawesi has been well provided. The present situation is not comprehensively outlined for review to understand fully how genetic study is conducted. The relation between the Government organization and communities needs to be explained better. It has not made clear what will be the impacts of the study on the sustainability of teak on one hand and conservation of the resources on the other hand. It's also not clear how the study will resolve the lack of interest of farmers and stakeholders to participate fully in this project neither is it clear the roles of the myriad of consultants with the budget which is on the higher side.

Furthermore, it's not understandable which activities contribute to the establishment of teak plantations and what shall be carried out in the remaining natural forest. The role of the intended agroforestry approach is disappearing with the progress of the proposal write-up. Gender issues are mentioned in 1 paragraph in the beginning but are not followed up and no activities in this respect are noticeable. The expected outcomes of the project are questionable. The project costs are rather high in comparison to the expected outcomes. All activities shall be carried out by subcontractors. There is an overload in the project management. About 99 % of the in-kind contribution of the EA refer to national specialists but no tasks are assigned to them. Several inconsistencies in logic, budget and language cause doubts in a thoughtful elaboration of the proposal.

Given that teak is an important commodity in the global market especially in the tropics, the Panel considered that the proposal should be revised so as to incorporate the recommendations set out to improve the quality of the proposal as below.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Elaborate existing conflicts between Governmental organizations and local communities in Section 1.3.2 (Social, cultural, economic and environmental aspects). It seems that there is a tension between Governmental organizations and local communities. Locals refuse to use teak in agroforestry systems;
2. More clarity needed which should be elaborated under and or from activities developed in Section 1.4 (Expected outcomes at project completion). As there are rather unspecific activities defined, it is partly unclear what the tangible outcomes are. The outcomes of the project are well stated, but how they can be achieved is lacking;
3. Elaborate collaborative frameworks among key stakeholders in Section 2.1.1 (Institutional set up and organizational issues) to ensure the effective collaboration between EA and partners;
4. Further elaborate the involvement of women in Section 2.1.2 (Stakeholder analysis);
5. Improve Section 2.1.3 (Problem analysis) by further elaborating the reasons of farmers to refuse the integration of teak in their agroforestry systems. They should not be persuaded to do so. The topic "installment of genetic resource conservation areas" should be completely reconsidered as it is very unclear what shall be done and how. There is general problem in articulating view points clearly in the English language. Evaluation therefore becomes a bit difficult to comprehend proponents 'thinking'. Provide the problem tree giving the full picture.
6. Refine the indicators in a more specific way in Section 2.1.4 (Logical framework matrix). Make a consistent presentation of figures as partly different figures used in the work plan;
7. Improve the presentation of the impact indicators in Section 2.2.1 (Development objective and impact indicators) as they're vague. Outcome indicators should be provided in Section 2.2.2 (Specific objective and

outcome indicators). Refine the statement of the specific objective as it is not completely in-line with the development objective.

8. Improve the correlation between Outputs and the problems stated in the problem tree in Section 3.1.1 (Outputs) as Outputs are largely differently formulated as in the problem tree. Beside Output 1, there must be measurable quantities, thus they must follow the SMART principle in project formulation. For Output 2, information on the applied silvicultural management system(s) is needed
9. Improve Section 3.1.2 (Activities), taking into account the following:
  - Activity 1.3: clarify the role of investors. What is the reason to create 3 groups of farmers?
  - Activity 2.1 the production of Kakemono is listed. Please make clear what Kakemono means. (Normally it is a Japanese roll picture.)
  - Activity 2.2: too general. Is only visual assessment carried out or also DNA analyses?
  - Activity 2.3: clarify the establishment of teak seed sources of 3 ha
  - Activity 2.5: “conduct silvicultural techniques” is questionable because for plantation only thinning are usual operations. The proponent can conduct a literature review.
  - Activity 3.1-3.3: lack of precise information for the conservation of genetic resources of Muna teak
10. Clarify the methods for Output 3 in Section 3.2 (Implementation approaches and methods) as the table matrix for implementation approach is laudable but some of the methods are not clear. Method for conservation of teak genetic resources is not clear. Is it by means of provenance trials or by means of employing molecular markers to assay for genetic variability then land on the populations with best variability and or heritability as provenance trials / common garden environment? It is rather unclear what the tasks are of 20 subcontractors and an unknown number of national experts;
11. Make the consistent presentation of activities between Section 3.3 (Work plan) and the logical framework matrix as some contain different figures in the logical framework matrix. Activity 2.3, 2.6 and 3.3 cover 2.5 years each. Output 4 is missing out 2 more activities;
12. Improve Section 3.5.1 (Assumptions and risks). Highly risky in securing farmers’ motivation as an active player. Farmers interest and needs are not adequately covered when an integration of teak in their agroforestry systems is foreseen. It is questionable that farmers cooperate;
13. Improve Section 3.5.2 (Sustainability) as it highly is doubtful;
14. Improve Section 4.1.1 (Executing Agency and Partners). The manner of the elaboration of the proposal in terms of substance is not convincing of their capabilities. Their capabilities are not proven. MOUs are missing;
15. Reduce the overloaded work for expensive staff in Section 4.1.2 (Project Management Team) Overloaded with expensive staff;
16. Specify the establishment of forums in Section 4.1.4 (Stakeholder involvement mechanisms) as "forums can be established" is very vague;
17. Include the dissemination of project results to local farmers and extension service in Section 4.3.1 (Dissemination of project results);
18. Provide more specific description in Section 4.3.2 (Mainstreaming project learning) ad transferability should be in the first place;
19. Improve the presentation of Annex 1 (Task and Responsibilities of key personnel) although it is provided but not comprehensive enough. Provide Annexes 2 (Tasks and responsibilities of key experts provided by the executing agency);
20. Improve the project budget presentations, taking into account the following:
  - a) Improve the consistent presentation between Table 3.4.1 (Master budget schedule) and Table 3.4.2 (Consolidated budget by component)  
Activities for sub-contractors must thoroughly be scaled down. A high number of persons is involved in the project management. Mostly personal, subcontracts, DSA, and air travel. All components are over bloated. A total of 20 sub-contractors sound luxurious and it begs the question of what EA will be doing as proponent for the this project.
  - b) Review Table 3.4.3 (ITTO budget by component) as it is too expensive and not realistic. The budget has been focused on “personal, subcontracts, travel incl. allowances”. Airfare is calculated with \$ 28,500. It should be indicated why flights must be used and from where to where

- c) Review Table 3.4.4 (Executing Agency Budget by Component) as it is very much on the lower side and mostly in kind. Roles of personnel not well defined. Almost the whole amount is foreseen as in-kind for national experts. But no tasks are assigned to them.
21. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (bold and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal.



**PD 921/21 (F) Support for the Conservation and Promotion of Forest Tree Seeds in Benin**

Assessment by the Fifty-Sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the project aims at contributing to ensure the production of certified seedlings for forest tree species in sufficient quantity with the goal to increase national forest cover through long-term efforts on reforestation and soil conservation in Benin. The unavailability of high-quality forest tree seeds, in particular those of most used species, impedes the forest production increase and activities regarding the reforestation and soil conservation in Benin.

However, the Panel noted that the project proposal contained a number of weaknesses in the sections and sub-sections dealing with: **(1)** Sufficient information on project context was available but origin of the project remained unclear in relation to the goal to ensure the production of certified forest tree seeds; **(2)** map with non-adequate scale making it difficult to clearly indicate the project area; **(3)** there is no reference to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23) in the analysis done in both the Sub-section 1.3.2 and Sub-section 1.3.3; **(4)** expected outcomes at project completion are not clearly correlated to the outcome indicators of the project specific objective; **(5)** besides for DGEFC the institutional set-up and organizational issues are not enough elaborated for other relevant partners in relation to what could be their roles, responsibilities and organizational aspects; **(6)** stakeholder analysis not elaborated enough to provide the appropriate information allowing the interpretation and understanding of the stakeholder tables; **(7)** problem analysis not appropriately elaborated as there is no clear explanation on the how the key problem is correlated to the causes and effects; **(8)** indicators still needing improvement for development objective and specific objective; **(9)** project implementation approaches and methods not clearly describing how to address the key problem and the names of 15 species to be used for the production of certified forest tree seeds are not provided in the Section 3.2; **(10)** in the Section 3.3 (Work plan) and Sub-section 3.4.1 (master budget), 4 outputs are mentioned, in contradiction with the problem tree and solution tree; **(11)** master budget table and related budget by components have taken into account the elements of Output 4 not derived from the problem tree and solution tree; **(12)** elements on the social sustainability and environmental sustainability of the project not referring to the the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23); **(13)** project steering committee not placed at the top of the organizational structure chart; **(14)** while some mechanisms are mentioned, the overall communication strategy is still weak and there is no description on how the project's results will be mainstreamed into national policies; **(15)** the profile of the implementing agency (DGEFC) and collaborating agency (FUPRO-Benin) are missing, as well as the CV of the project manager and key project personnel to be paid by the ITTO budget; **(16)** the TORs following the structure included in the ITTO Manual (page 68, French version), for consultants and experts, are missing as annexes.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the project origin in relation to the goal to ensure the production of certified forest tree seeds.
2. Provide a map with an appropriate scale allowing to clearly indicate the project target sites.
3. Re-visit the Sub-section 1.3.2 and Sub-section 1.3.3 while making sure to take into account relevant elements of the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23).
4. Reformulate the expected outcomes (Chapter 1.4) in consistency with the outcome indicators of the specific objective. There is a need to refer to the guidance box on page 23 of the ITTO manual for project formulation (French version).
5. Further elaborate the institutional set-up and organizational issues, in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation, for key partners to be involved the project implementation.
6. Improve the stakeholder analysis with additional elements introducing in a comprehensive manner the stakeholder table and describing who might influence or be influenced by the identified key problem or by the potential solution to that problem.
7. Improve the problem analysis with appropriate causes and effects which are really correlated to the identified key problem, while adequately describing the causes and effects of the identified key problem and revising the problem tree and objective tree accordingly, in compliance with appropriate guidance of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
8. Improve the logical framework matrix in correlation with the revised problem tree and solution tree, and while making sure to have measurable and realistic indicators for a 3-year project (not by 2030 which

beyond the project duration) and be in accordance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.

9. Subsequent to the improvement of the logical framework matrix, the indicators of the development objective and specific objective should be redefined accordingly in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
10. Subsequent to the improvement of the problem analysis, revise the Section 3.1 (Outputs and activities) accordingly, while making sure to delete Output 4 in the Section 3.3 (Work plan) and Sub-section 3.4.1 (master budget).
11. Improve the implementation approaches and methods by describing how to address the key problem in accordance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation, as well as by describing 15 forest tree species to be used for the production of certified forest tree seeds.
12. Improve the Section 3.5.2 (sustainability) in consistency with the elements described in the assumptions of the logical framework matrix, while referring to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23) for social and environmental sustainability, and in accordance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.
13. Improve the organizational structure chart in compliance with the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation (refer to figure 13 on page 64, in French version).
14. Further describe the communication strategy and methods of the project team and how the project results and learning will be made useful to users in the Sub-section 4.3.1 and describe how the project results will be mainstreamed into national policies in the Sub-section 4.3.2, as per the ITTO Manual.
15. Add as annexes, the profile of implementing agency (DGEFC) and collaborating agency (FUPRO-Benin), the 1-page CV of the project coordinator and key project personnel, the TORs following the structure included in the ITTO Manual (page 68, French version) for consultants and experts mentioned to be paid by ITTO budget.
16. Amend the ITTO budget in line with the above overall assessment and specific recommendations, and also in the following way:
  - a) Prepare a new master budget table with activities to be derived from the improved problem analysis, problem tree and objective tree, while making sure to delete all activities regarding the Output 4, and it should be the source for the readjustment of budgets by component, as required in the ITTO manual for project formulation,
  - b) Adjust the budget item 81 with the standard rate of US\$10,000.00 per year for the monitoring and review costs (US\$30,000 for 3 years) of a project implemented in Africa and the budget item 83 with the standard rate of US\$15,000 for ex-post evaluation costs,
  - c) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (sub-item 83) so as to conform with standard rate of **12%** of the total ITTO project costs (on budget items 10 to 82); and
17. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56<sup>th</sup> Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 2: The Panel concluded that the project proposal requires essential modifications and will be returned to the proponent. The Panel will need to assess the revised project proposal before it can commend it to the Committee for final appraisal.

**PPD 198/21 (F) Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin**

Assessment by the Fifty-Sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel acknowledged the relevance of this pre-project which could contribute to assess the potential of gallery forests in the Mono Delta biosphere reserve, with a view to developing a full project proposal for their sustainable management. That project could contribute to the conservation and sustainable management of the Mono Delta biosphere reserve, in Benin, by building the capacities of local populations with the goal to improving their living conditions.

The pre-project proposal followed the structure provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation but there was still a need for improvement in the following sections and sub-sections dealing with: **(1)** the Sub-section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities) did not provide the elements regarding the conformity with the priorities and operational activities specified in the current ITTO strategic action plan 2013-2018 extended towards 2021; **(2)** the key problem and its main causes and effects not clearly described in the section dealing with the preliminary identification of the problem to be addressed by the future project; **(3)** there was no reference to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23), in the Section 3.3 (implementation approaches and methods), as the abovementioned guidelines should be taken into account while undertaking the survey on socio-economic aspects and conducting the project environmental and social impact assessment; **(4)** non-relevant budget lines found in the ITTO budget table; **(5)** Curricula vitae (CV) of the Project Coordinator and Assistant Responsible for monitoring and evaluation were not provided as annexes.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the Sub-section 1.2.1 (Conformity with ITTO objectives and priorities) by including the elements regarding the conformity with the priorities and operational activities specified in the current ITTO strategic action plan 2013-2018 extended towards 2021.
2. Describe clearly, in the section dealing with the preliminary problem identification, the key problem and its main causes and effects to be addressed by the implementation of the future project.
3. Add in the section, dealing with implementation approaches and methods, the need to refer to the relevant elements in the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23) for the socio-economic study and the environmental assessment to be carried out during the pre-project implementation.
4. Include as annexes the 1-page CVs (following the structure provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation, on page 68, French version) of the Project Coordinator and Assistant Responsible for monitoring and evaluation.
5. Readjust the ITTO budget in accordance with the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and also in the following way:
  - a) Delete the budget line 51 (fuel and lubricant) and budget line (52 (vehicle spare parts) as no vehicle is purchased with ITTO budget,
  - b) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component 83) specified in the budget so as to conform with new standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO pre-project costs; and
6. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

**PPD 201/21 (F) Study for Capacity Building of Private and Community Tree Farmers in Benin**

Assessment by the Fifty-Sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel noted the relevance of the pre-project proposal to assist in collecting data with a view to developing a capacity-building project for private and community tree farmers in southern Benin. That project could contribute to the sustainable management of private forests in Benin for improving the living conditions of local populations. It was noted that the pre-project was justified by the lack of data hindering the possibility of directly developing a full project proposal.

The pre-project proposal was well formulated but there was still a need for improvement in the following sections and sub-sections dealing with: **(1)** the Section 1.1 (origin and justification) did not explain why the future project will be implemented in southern Benin; **(2)** the preliminary identification of the problem that the future project will contribute to address did not provided elements justifying the selection of southern Benin as target area for the implementation of the future project; **(3)** there was no reference to the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23), in the Section 3.3 (implementation approaches and methods), as the abovementioned guidelines should be taken into account while conducting the socio-economic study; **(4)** non-relevant budget lines found in the ITTO budget table; **(5)** Curricula vitae (CV) of the Project Coordinator and Assistant Responsible for monitoring and evaluation were not provided as annexes.

B) Specific Recommendations

The proposal should be revised taking into account the overall assessment **and** the following:

1. Improve the Section 1.1 (origin and justification) by including the elements justifying the selection of southern Benin vis-vis to other regions of Benin.
2. Improve the preliminary problem identification with technical elements correlated to the identified key problem arguing for the implementation of the future project in southern Benin as a contribution to address the identified key problem.
3. Add in the Section 3.3 (implementation approaches and methods) the need to refer to the relevant elements in the ITTO Environmental and Social Guidelines (PS-23) for the socio-economic study to be carried out during the pre-project implementation.
4. Include as annexes the 1-page CVs (following the structure provided in the ITTO manual for project formulation, on page 68, French version) of the Project Coordinator and Assistant Responsible for monitoring and evaluation.
5. Readjust the ITTO budget in accordance with the above overall assessment and specific recommendations and also in the following way:
  - a) Delete the budget line 51 (fuel and lubricant) and budget line (52 (vehicle spare parts) as no vehicle is purchased with ITTO budget,
  - b) Recalculate the ITTO Programme Support Costs (Sub-component 83) specified in the budget so as to conform with new standard rate of 12% of the total ITTO pre-project costs; and
6. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

**PPD 202/21 (F) Conservation of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* Poir in Benin**

Assessment by the Fifty-Sixth Panel

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the pre-project is aimed at addressing the lack of information of *Pterocarpus erinaceus* Poir which is under threat of over exploitation and therefore CITES Appendix II listed. The intention of the pre-project is quite laudable to address the need to have more information about the endangered *Pterocarpus erinaceus* Poir species which is endemic to Sahel West African region.

The Panel noted that the proposal did not provide clear explanation on what additional information should be gathered to support project identification, design and/or the formulation of a full project document. A pre-project is usually designed to assist in the identification and elaboration of a full project proposal. A pre-project should clarify the purpose of the ultimate project and the additional information the pre-project will gather to support project formulation. Therefore, a fundamental expected output of pre-project is usually a full project proposal document.

The content of the pre-project proposal is too ambiguous. The foreseen tasks would qualify easily for a 3-year project if all tasks are neatly carried out. Beyond that the proposal addresses so many outputs that the reader gets the impression that this is a condensed version of a previous full project proposal. This might be underlined by the fact that the elaboration of a full proposal is not mentioned in the whole proposal. Furthermore, it was noted that there was a number of weaknesses in most sections and sub-sections, including the most critical ones: development objective and specific objective not appropriately defined for a pre-project, preliminary problem identification not focusing on the problems that hinder the elaboration of a full project proposal, outputs not mentioning the full project to be derived from the pre-project implementation, work plan and budgets not appropriate for a pre-project.

Finally, it was noted that the proposal is formulated as a small project (ITTO budget less than US\$150,000) rather than a pre-project. This is making it difficult to provide specific recommendations which could be source of confusion for the proponent rather than recommending a total reformulation of the proposal as either a project or a pre-project following the requirements of the ITTO manual for project formulation.

B) Conclusion

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee because a complete reformulation of the proposal is necessary either as a pre-project or a project.

**Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel**

A) Overall Assessment

The proposed project aimed at enhancing and diversify domestic consumption and promote local markets of wood and wood products in Vietnam. The Panel opined that the proposal is well thought out with a clear rationale, objectives and plan of actions to achieve the desired results of improving the economic and environmental sustainability of Vietnam's domestic wood products industry while strengthening the capacities of growers and various actors along the wood products value chain. However, there are some weaknesses in the formulation of the proposal that need to be improved. The Panel suggests that the proponent should more proactively seek gender inclusion by stating that all the trainings and workshops outlined in the proposal will include women, and aspects of the Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (GEEW) and Environmental and Social Management (ESM) Guidelines -should be highlighted in the document.

B) Specific Recommendations

1. In Section Map of Project Area, submit better quality map of the project area;
2. In Section 1.2.1 Conformity with ITTO's objectives and priorities, add more justification on why the proposed project is relevant with ITTA 2006 and the Strategic Action Plan 2013-2018. Also explain how the project consistent with other ITTO's policies, e.g. GEEW, ESM, etc.;
3. In Section 1.4 Expected outcomes at project completion, present the section more clearly by consulting with the ITTO Manual for project formulation. It was unclear about intended immediate effects, changes the project will bring about, what benefits for whom, etc.;
4. In Section 2.1.1 Institutional set up and organizational issues, identify the institutions to be involved, competence of each and level of coordination between them. Present in accordance with the ITTO Manual for project formulation.
5. In Section 2.1.2 Stakeholder analysis, need to indicate pros and cons of the project's objectives in order to enable pursuing appropriate operational strategy. Consult with the ITTO Manual.  
Japan Forest Agency provided the following comments:
  - While the stakeholders in supply side, including wood processing and trading enterprises, household-base wood businesses, and private sector associations, are well covered as the primary stakeholders, those in consumer side are not mentioned in the table.
  - Domestic consumers, especially those in urban areas, should be covered as the key stakeholders in this project, as they account for more than one third of population in Viet Nam (34.7% as of 2018), and are promising for expanded use of wood products in their daily lives.
6. In Section 2.1.3 Problem analysis, this Section was well presented; the cause-effect relationship was clear yet requires elaboration. Need to elaborate how addressing the causes will lead to eradication of the key problem;
7. In Section 2.1.4 Logical framework matrix, the indicators were poorly developed; not SMART ones, less useful for measuring achievements. Identify 4 indicators of Output 1 and 4 indicators of Output 2, consistent with planned outcomes of activities. See the ITTO Manual;
8. In Section 2.2.1 Development objective and impact indicators, present measurable indicators; consult with the ITTO Manual and be consistent with Section 2.1.4;
9. In Section 2.2.2 Specific objective and outcome indicators, identify SMART indicators of the specific objective by consulting the ITTO Manual. This Section must be in consistency with Section 2.1.4;
10. In Section 3.1 Outputs and Activities, Japan Forest Agency provided the following comments:
  - Output1: When developing a policy/strategy for promoting domestic consumption of wood & wood products, views of consumers in urban area are very important, since they are potential users of wooden houses, wooden energy, or wooden daily goods. The policy/strategy draft should be circulated to potential consumers (or relevant associations) of wood products for their inputs.
  - Output2: Regarding the promotion of local consumption, this project should aim at consumers in urban areas as its most promising target. In this regard, the Activity 2.2.2 "Communicate to promote the use of planted wood as the most environment friendly and renewable material" should focus on urban consumers with relatively higher income. For this end, promotion tools which explain the rationales of wood use promotion, including light weight, humidity control, air purification, comfortability, cutting-edge designs as well as global warming mitigation for consumer's understanding need to be developed in consultation with relevant experts. If possible, questionnaires survey on consumers' understanding of the idea of "sustainable domestic wood use" might be useful as an indicator of policy outcomes;

11. In Section 3.1.1 Outputs, need to define 4 indicators for each Output consistent with planned outcomes of each of the activities.
12. In Section 3.1.2 Activities, define 4 activities for each Output consistent with the problem analysis that identified 4 sub-causes under each main cause;
13. In Section 3.2 Implementation approaches and methods, present the section in accordance with the ITTO Manual;
14. In Section 2.2 Work Plan, develop a workplan for 2 Outputs and main activities. They must be consistent with the problem and objective trees.
15. In Section 3.4.1 Master Budget Schedule, revise based on new definitions of the activities under each output. Use the same titles of budget components as in the Manual;
16. In Section 3.4.2 Consolidated Budget by Component, use the same titles of budget components as in the ITTO Manual;
17. In Section 3.4.3 ITTO Budget by Component, confirm the ITTO Program support cost, 12% of the project cost, delete the budget item "Secretariat";
18. In Section 3.4.4 Executing Agency Budget by Component, increase Vietnam's contribution under the duty travel, consumables and miscellaneous components;
19. In Section 3.5.2 Sustainability, improve the section by identifying follow up tasks to accomplish, the executing agencies and funding sources;
20. In Section 4.1.2 Project Management Team, revise the section in accordance with the ITTO Manual. Provide information on project key personnel and their competences, respective tasks and responsibilities;
21. In Section 4.1.3 Project Steering Committee, improve the section in accordance with the ITTO Manual; need to provide more information on the PTC, e.g. Function, membership, etc.;
22. In Section 4.1.4 Stakeholder involvement mechanisms, Improve the section by explaining how stakeholders will be involved in the project;
23. In Section 4.2 Reporting, review, monitoring and evaluation, correct the number of this section as Section 4.2;
24. In Section 4.3.1 Dissemination of project results, consider also to produce short videos and use of Instagram and Youtube channel;
25. In Section 4.3.2 Mainstreaming project learning, explain use of project's results in policy making as the initial intention, at what level, by whom, etc.;
26. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold** and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

**Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel**

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the aim of this pre-project is to collect information on the woodworking sector in Benin in order to formulate a project for strengthening the technical, professional, and organizational capacities of woodworking artisans in Benin. The craft sector is particularly important as it contributes to 11 per cent to Benin's gross domestic product (GDP) and employs a large part of the labor force. This pre-project proposal also contributes to the rational and sustainable use of timber in Benin (Development Objective).

Therefore, the Panel recognizes that the pre-project proposal is consistent with ITTO's mandate and objectives as set out in ITTA 2006 and with Benin's forest policy. It also recognizes that:

- The geographical location, social, cultural, and environmental aspects are sufficiently elaborated.
- The development objective and the specific objective are clear and well identified.
- The work plan is good and logical.
- The budget is well balanced between the Executive Agency and ITTO.
- The problem is well identified (lack of information on the woodworking sector) and the envisaged outputs and activities are logically derived and contribute to the objective of the pre-project.

Nevertheless, some minor weaknesses are still present and listed in the specific recommendations.

B) Specific Recommendations

1. The state of the art in Benin could be better outlined. As the Government knows about the relevance of the woodworking sector to the national gross product, it must be assumed that some data and information are available.
2. The study area for the pre-project should be clarified ("**Southern Benin**" being too vague) as the outputs of the pre-project would be realistic only if the geographical extent of the study area is not too big. A map of the regions studied would be helpful.
3. Information of the methods and representativeness of the foreseen surveys are missing and should be inserted.
4. The Executive Agency should clarify why the socio-economic consultant is more expensive than the inventory expert.
5. The Executive Agency should clarify what the \$100 per person/day in **Activity 1.4** covers (i.e., does it include per diem, food & beverages, and transport?). This allocation seems a bit expensive as the cost of \$5,000 per month for the elaboration of a full proposal (**budget component 25**) and therefore should be reduced.
6. In the table **Master budget schedule**, the total cost of the evaluation and monitoring manager is \$15,000 but is only covered by the \$10,000 requested on the ITTO budget. The remaining \$5,000 should be clarified as where this missing sum is coming from, and the table should be corrected.
7. The roles and tasks of the contributing partners should be more clarified.
8. The TORs in **Annex 5** differ from the defined tasks in the text of the pre-project proposal and therefore should be aligned with the pre-project proposal's text.
9. The idea of providing financial assistance to the sector (through micro credits for example) could be more expanded in the proposal.
10. Two technical reports or more reporting on activities 1.1, 1.2 and 1.4 and the results of the studies should be carried out during the pre-project.
11. The **Budget item 71** is missing in the **Master Budget Table** and therefore should be added in this table.
12. A vehicle should be included the Executive Agency budget contribution.
13. **Activity 1.0** should be clarified as well as **Activity 1.3** (what awareness should be raised from stakeholders?).
14. The lack of raw materials could also be included in this pre-project proposal as a major drawback that the sector might face.
15. The development of more value-added timber products could also be explored through this pre-project.
16. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 56th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold and underline**) in the text.



C) Conclusion

Category 1: The Panel concluded that the proposal could be commended to the Committee with incorporation of amendments.

PPD 199/21 (M)

**Strengthening the Competitiveness and Sustainability of the Forest  
Value Chain through Eco-Efficiency  
(CAF/Colombia/Ecuador/Mexico/Panama/Paraguay)**

**Assessment by the Fifty-sixth Panel**

A) Overall Assessment

The Panel recognized that the aim of this pre-project is to strengthen the competitiveness and sustainability of the forest value chain through eco-efficiency in Colombia, Ecuador, Mexico, Panama and Paraguay.

However, as a pre-project proposal, the Panel noted the weaknesses in the overall formulation of this proposal, especially in the sections of problem analysis, specific objective, outputs and activities, the project budget, required Annexes.

The Panel especially noted that the formulation of specific objective, outputs and activities and project budget appeared not to closely follow the ITTO manual for project formulation. As a pre-project, a full project proposal was not presented as a main output and the total budget exceeded \$150,000. Furthermore, those appropriate budget tables, such as the consolidate budget by component, ITTO's budget and the Executive Agency budget, as well as the required Annexes were missing.

Nevertheless, the Panel appreciates the potential of this pre-project and encourages the proponent to reformulate the proposal by taking into account the above comments.

B) Specific Recommendations

1. Revise the proposal in accordance to the format of a pre-project rather than a project;
2. Refine the problem analysis with more explanations on a clear preliminary problem identification;
3. Reformulate the specific objectives into an integrated one;
4. Rephrase the outputs and include the full project proposal as a main output of this proposal.
5. Describe unit cost and input for each activity;
6. Provide more explanation on the approaches and methods for implementing activities;
7. Reduce the budget of this pre-project under \$150,000 as required;
8. Add the missing budget tables such as the consolidate budget by component, ITTO's budget and the Executive Agency budget;
9. Provide more detailed and clear information on the Executing Agency and its organisational structure;
10. Give more details on the technical team and explain how the team will work with the National experts and the National Coordinators;
11. Add the missing required Annexes including the Profile of the Executing Agency, the Tasks and responsibilities of key experts provided by the executing agency, the ToRs of personnel and consultants funded by ITTO.
12. Include an Annex that shows the overall assessment and specific recommendations of the 55th Expert Panel and respective modifications in tabular form. Modifications should also be highlighted (**bold** and underline) in the text.

C) Conclusion

Category 4: The Panel concluded that it could not commend the proposal to the Committee, and submits it to the Committee with the recommendation not to approve the pre-project proposal.

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