



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

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Virtual Session

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

Item 1 - Opening of the Session

The Fifty-fifth Virtual Session of the Committee on Reforestation and Forest Management (CRF) was opened on 29 November 2021 by Ms. Aysha Ghadiali (USA), Chairperson of the CRF. The list of participants is presented in Document ITTC(LVII)/Info.2.

Item 2 - Adoption of Agenda and Organization of Work

The Provisional Agenda for the CRF, as contained in Document CRF(LV)/1, was adopted by the Committee. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the virtual session of the Fifty-seventh ITTC was decided and allowed limited time for the discussion of Committee agenda items. To expedite the proceedings of the Committee session within the limited time allocated to the Committee, the Chairperson of the CRF recommended that the Secretariat make briefs on the Committee agenda items 5 – 10. In addition, in case of any specific matters about projects, the Chairperson encouraged Delegates to discuss them with the Secretariat via emails during and after this virtual session.

Item 3 - Admission of Observers

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

Item 4 - ITTO Annual Market Discussion - 2021

The Committees noted the summary of the ITTO Annual Market Discussion – 2021, held in the Joint Session of All Committees on 30 November 2021, as contained in Appendix A to Document CEM-CFI(LV)/3. The theme of the Market Discussion was “Challenges in Manufacturing and Trade during the COVID-19 Pandemic”. Mr. Barney Chan (TAG Co-coordinator) chaired the Market Discussion.

The following feature presentations were made during the Market Discussion (available on www.itto.int):

Mr. Ivan Tomaselli, President, STCP Brazil	<i>Impact of COVID-19 on the Latin American Forest Sector and Recovery</i>
Mr. Wu Shengfu, General Manager Beijing Greenwood Certification Co., Ltd.	<i>Challenges in Manufacturing and Trade during the COVID-19 Pandemic</i>
Mr. Bradley A. McKinney, Executive Director International Wood Products Association (IWPA)	<i>Challenges and Opportunities in International Wood Products Trade</i>
Mr. Benoît Jobbé-Duval, Managing Director Association Technique Internationale des Bois Tropicaux	<i>Major Challenges in Sustainable Tropical Timber Management and the Future of Tropical Forests</i>
Mr. Ernie Koh Jyh Eng, Executive Director, Koda Secretary General ASEAN Furniture Industries Council	<i>ASEAN Furniture Production and Exports during this Pandemic – Multiple Challenges and Diverse Response</i>
Mr. Sigit Pramono, Senior Policy Analyst Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia	<i>Update on the Implementation of Indonesian TLAS (SVLK), FLEGT VPA, and Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Timber Exports from Indonesia</i>
Mr. Jan Hoffmann, Chief, Trade Logistics Branch Division on Technology and Logistics UNCTAD	<i>Presentation of the Review of Maritime Transport 2021</i>

The Committees further noted the statement of the Trade Advisory Group (TAG) presented during the Market Discussion as contained in Appendix B to Document CEM-CFI(LV)/3.

Item 5 - Policy Work

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

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

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

- The implementation of this Activity #3 under the ITTO Programme on Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains (LSSC) was extended until December 2021 because the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Six national consultants had prepared country-led studies on forest landscape restoration (FLR) in their respective countries (Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Ghana, Liberia, Mali and Togo) under the guidance of the international lead consultant, Professor Juergen BLASER, Bern University of Applied Sciences, Switzerland. National validation workshops were held under the leadership of the regional consultant, Professor Kouami KOKOU of the University of Lomé (Togo), as experts from Switzerland could not travel to Africa because of the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions.
- The completion report, which was submitted in September 2021, will be considered as an annex of the final report to be prepared by the Division of Operations for submission to BMEL-Germany (financial donor) in the first half of 2022.
- A draft TFU article was submitted to the ITTO Communication and Outreach Unit for review, while other outreach materials (short video and PowerPoint presentations) resulting from the implementation of the Activity are expected to be submitted early December 2021.

The Committee took note of the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Work related Activity, which is expected to be completed by end of December 2021, in ITTO member countries in West Africa.

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

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

- The Activity #5 of the ITTO LSSC Programme, which was extended until December 2021 because the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, is implemented by the RIFFEAC Secretariat on LSSC-related issues in ITTO member countries in the Congo Basin region (Cameroun, Central African Republic, Congo-Brazzaville, Congo-Kinshasa and Gabon). It is implemented by the RIFFEAC Secretariat, which is also in charge of the supervision of four consultants in charge of the preparation of four draft of training modules/curricula which were reviewed by experts during the holding of validation workshops. These four training modules/curricula and related four consultants are, as follows:
 - Module/curriculum 1: "*Understanding deforestation-free*" [by Dr. Bonaventure LELE NYAMI]
 - Module/curriculum 2: "*Assessing legality and achieving accountability*" [by Dr. Felix KOUBOUANA]
 - Module/curricula 3: "*From legality to sustainability*" [by Dr. François HIOL HIOL]
 - Module/curriculum 4: "*Markets and access to markets*" [by Dr. Jean Marcial BELL]
- These four training modules/curricula are being finalized by consultants, based on the comments and recommendations of validation workshops, in view of their submission to the ITTO Secretariat by end of November 2021.

The Committee took note of the progress made in the implementation of this Policy Work related Activity, in ITTO member countries in Congo Basin, which is expected to be completed by end of December 2021.

(iii) Dissemination of the ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics [Activity 11 (b), ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2021-2022]

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

- The ITTO Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics were developed with the support of many members of the Collaborative Partnership on Forests (CPF), including CIFOR, FAO, IUCN and IUFRO.
- To increase awareness and understanding of the ITTO FLR Guidelines, a series of webinars has been organized for Latin America and the Caribbean, and Asia-Pacific region in 2021.
- The first webinar took place on 19 August 2021, with the participation of around 70 restoration experts from Central American countries and Mexico. It featured speakers from various organizations, including CATIE, IUCN, and WRI. The participants recognized that FLR interventions must be carried out by fully engaging local people, especially farmers and smallholders.
- The second webinar was held from 30 August to 3 September 2021 for the Asia-Pacific Region. It was jointly organized with the Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCO). Around 70 participants recognized that creating sustainable livelihood opportunities for local communities and smallholders is crucial for the long-term sustainability of FLR projects.
- The third webinar was held on 23 September 2021 for Latin America and the Caribbean. It was co-hosted by ITTO and CATIE. It was attended by around 90 restoration experts and speakers from CATIE, CIFOR, ICRAF, and IUCN.
- Under the FLR initiative of the CPF, which was funded by GEF, ITTO and IUFRO jointly produced four FLR learning modules in October 2021. The four FLR modules are 1) FLR principles, 2) FLR project design and implementation, 3) FLR facilitation and capacity building development and 4) Securing FLR finances. The ITTO-IUFRO FLR learning modules are posted on the ITTO website and they can be used by high schools and universities in the tropics to boost curricula.

The Delegation of the United States commented that the organization of FLR webinars in collaboration with many partners showcased the different types of partnerships ITTO can and has made with other international organizations. Noting that FLR is an important part of the global forest agenda, she supported the continued promotion of the FLR guidelines at national and international levels, including at the World Forestry Congress in May 2022. The Committee recommended that the Secretariat actively promote the ITTO FLR guidelines in the context of the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030.

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

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

- ITTO has implemented the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity since 2011 after COP 10 of the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in Nagoya, Japan.
- The ITTO Secretariat carried out a technical assessment of 16 projects which have been implemented under the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative. The results of the technical assessment of the ITTO/CBD Collaborative Initiative are reported in Document CRF(LV)/4. The Committee will receive a presentation on the technical assessment under the ex-post evaluation reports of the Committee Agenda Item 9 (Ex-post evaluations).
- In February 2021, ITTO and CBD renewed the MoU for another five years until 2025, with the aim of supporting CBD Parties and ITTO member countries in the tropics in their efforts to conserve biodiversity, implement sustainable forest management, restore degraded forest landscapes, and encourage the sustainable use of forest resources.
- The renewed collaboration between the CBD and ITTO will help countries develop technical expertise to enhance tropical biodiversity and the provision of ecosystem services in forest landscapes. The joint collaboration will also support capacity building to implement the ITTO/IUCN Guidelines for the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity in Tropical Timber Production Forests and other relevant guidelines and policies of the CBD and ITTO.
- The Secretariat plans to organize a joint side event with the CBD Secretariat at CBD COP 15 in China in May 2022 to share lessons from the implementation of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative. After COP 15, the Secretariat will revise the Programme Document of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative, taking into account the lessons of its technical assessment, as well as the tropical forest-related goals and targets of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

The Committee recommended the effective implementation of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity in support of the achievement of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

**(v) Adapting the 2006 ITTO Criteria and Indicators (C&I) for Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) to African context [Document CRF(LV)/6]
[Decision 2(LIII)] [Activity 7 (b), ITTO Biennial Work Programme 2021-2022] [PP-A/55-336 / BWP 18-19/8b C&I Africa]**

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

- A workshop involving African forestry-related experts has validated a draft new version of the ITTO Criteria and Indicators for the sustainable management of African tropical forests, developed in September 2021 by two following consultants: Dr Richard EBA'A ATYI and Mr. Olivier AHIMIN. The aim was to revise the Principles, Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainable Forest Management of African Natural Forests, developed previously by the African Timber Organization (ATO) and ITTO, to ensure that it conforms with recently published ITTO policy documents, such as the *ITTO Environmental and Social Management Guidelines* and the *Guidelines for Forest Landscape Restoration in the Tropics*.
- At the conclusion of the workshop, participants made several recommendations, including the following:
 - Countries should systematically assess the implementation of SFM using the new ITTO Criteria and Indicators for the Sustainable Management of African Tropical Forests and report on the progress made.
 - Countries should incentivize those forest companies shown to have adopted SFM, based on technical audits conducted using the new set of ITTO C&I for sustainable forest management adapted to Africa context.
 - ITTO should produce a user manual for the new C&I for SFM adapted to African context.
- The draft set of ITTO C&I for sustainable forest management adapted to Africa context is available on ITTO website, as Document CRF(LV)/6, for comments by ITTO Members until mid-December 2021.

The consultant, Dr Richard EBA'A ATYI, made a presentation on the draft set of Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management adapted to African context and highlighted the following points:

- The experts from ITTO member countries in Africa, who validated the draft set of Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management adapted to African context, gave more emphasis on the following aspects:
- Improved governance of natural resources management including human capacities and better allocation of financial and material resources to the forestry sector (Criterion 1)
- More detailed planning of forest management in the ground (criterion 4)
- Better sharing of benefits resulting from forest management to improve the livelihoods of forest dependent people (criterion 7)
- Synergy between ITTO and governments to enhance National Working Groups on C&I for SFM adapted to African context and integrate them into the forest governance process in ITTO member countries in Africa
- Annual meetings of ITTO focal points to assess the implementation of the C&I for SFM adapted to African context by ITTO member countries in Africa.
- Training of SFM audit trainers once the new set is adopted through a new regional project be developed for enabling its dissemination while considering relevant new issues such as climate change, REDD+, and land restoration.

Following the presentation of Dr Richard EBA'A ATYI, the Delegation of Peru welcomed the development of the draft set of Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management adapted to African context while reminding that ITTO was the pioneer in establishing the first set of C&I for SFM. He reminded that FAO and ITTO collaborated for the development of a national set of C&I for SFM in selected countries in Latin America which should be subject to monitoring for assessing its utilization as a forest-related policy tool.

The Committee commended the two consultants for their excellent work in formulating the draft set of Criteria and Indicators for sustainable forest management adapted to African context. ITTO Members were encouraged by the Committee to review the draft set of ITTO C&I for sustainable forest management adapted to Africa context, which is available on the ITTO website, as Document CRF(LV)/6, for comments, until mid-December 2021. The final version incorporating the comments of ITTO Members should be made available on the ITTO website, in 2022, in all three working languages of ITTO, for the adoption through an electronic no-objection procedure.

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

The Committee noted that the Expert Panel for Technical Appraisal of Project Proposals at its Fifty-sixth Meeting was held virtually due to the COVID-19 pandemic in June-July 2021. The Committee also noted the report of Expert Panel at its Fifty-sixth Meeting as contained in Document ITTC(LVII)/5 which covers the technical assessment of nine projects and five pre-projects proposals.

Item 7 - New Projects and Pre-projects

The Committee noted the projects and pre-projects that were approved under the time-bound electronic no objection procedures to accept the Expert Panel's ratings and circulated to member countries pursuant to Decision 6(XLIII), as contained in Annex to Document ITTC(LVII)/5, following the recommendations of the Expert Panel at its Fifty-sixth Meeting as follows:

Fifty-sixth Expert Panel

Category 1:

PD/PPD NUMBER	TITLE	SUBMITTING COUNTRY
PD 916/21 Rev.1 (F)	Pilot Sustainable Management Systems for Secondary Natural Forests in the Collective Afro-descendant Community Territory of the Bajo Calima Community Council, Municipality of Buenaventura, Colombia	Colombia
PPD 198/21 Rev.1 (F)	Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin	Benin
PPD 201/21 Rev.1 (F)	Study for Capacity Building of Private and Community Tree Farmers in Benin	Benin

Category 4:

PD/PPD NUMBER	TITLE	SUBMITTING COUNTRY
PPD 202/21 (F)	Conservation of <i>Pterocarpus erinaceus</i> Poir in Benin	Benin

Item 8 - Report on Completed Projects and Pre-projects

The Committee considered the completed projects contained in Document CRF(LV)/2 and noted that three projects and one pre-project are to be declared complete by the Council.

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

The Committee took note that the implementation of this project had mainly contributed to the development and validation of reference technical guidebooks and ministerial decrees providing clear guidance for the creation and management of a community forest in Gabon. These guidebooks and ministerial decrees are available through the project search section of the ITTO website. The Committee also took note that the implementation of this project led to the creation of the Direction des Forêts Communautaires (DFCOM), within the ministry in charge of forestry, an administrative entity dealing with community forestry, in July 2011, as an expression of the Gabonese Government's interest in capitalizing on the project's achievements.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 383/05 Rev.2 (F) as completed.

2) PD 646/12 Rev.3 (F) Initiating the Conservation of Cempaka Tree Species (*Elmerrillia* spp) Through Plantation Development with Local Community Participation in North Sulawesi, Indonesia (Indonesia)

The Committee took note that this project has been implemented by the Manado Forestry Research Institute, Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Indonesia since February 2016. It has contributed to the

conservation and plantations of Cempaka tree species which is an important traditional wooden housing material in North Sulawesi, Indonesia through improved capacity of local communities and increased support of local government policies. Key outcomes of the project include the establishment of 18 ha of Cempaka plantations with 3 small-scale nurseries for demonstration and R&D, as well as a standard operational manual for Cempaka plantations, a provincial Cempaka stakeholder forum, and an integrated strategic management plan for the conservation and development of Cempaka's resources in North Sulawesi.

The Delegation of Indonesia commented on the importance of promoting Cempaka plantations in North Sulawesi and expressed its gratitude to the Government of Japan for financing the project and to the Secretariat for the successful implementation of the project.

The Committee further noted that the Executing Agency submitted the completion report and technical reports as well as the final financial audit report in accordance with the Project Agreement. The technical reports have been posted on the ITTO website and copies of these reports can be made available, upon request, by the Secretariat. Therefore, the Committee decided to consider the project PD 646/12 Rev.3 (F) as completed.

3) PD 741/14 Rev.3 (F) Capacity Building for Sustainable Management of Tropical Dry Forests on the North Coast of Peru (Peru)

The Committee took note that this project had been implemented by AIDER (*Association para la Investigacion y Desarrollo Integral*) with for capacity building through training workshops on the Forest Map Methodology by using a free software to develop regional thematic maps in each region based on extensive data collection and consultations required for the preparation of Forest Management Plans for dry forests in Piura, Tumbes and Lambayeque regions in Peru.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 741/14 Rev.3 (F) as completed.

8.2 Completed Pre-project

1) PPD 191/18 Rev.1 (F) Support to the Local Communities of the Mono Plain for the Promotion and Sustainable Management of Community Forests in Togo (Togo)

The Committee took note that this pre-project had been implemented by AMEN association (*Amis de l'Environnement*) in collaboration with DRF (*Direction des Ressources Forestieres* of the ministry in charge of forestry in Togo) for collecting data on forestry, socio-economic, legal and environmental aspects required for the formulation of a full project proposal. The Secretariat received a full project proposal which was subject to the technical appraisal by the 55th Expert Panel. The reference number and title of the project proposal are as follows: PD 911/20 (F): "*Support for Strengthening the Consultation Framework for the Participatory and Sustainable Management of the Aou-Mono Gazetted Forest*".

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the pre-project PPD 191/18 Rev.1 (F) as completed.

Item 9 - Ex-post Evaluation

(A) Ex-post Evaluation Reports
[Document CRF(LV)/4]

The Secretariat reported to the Committee on the progress made in the ex-post evaluation as follows:

- In 2020-2021, the ex-post evaluation of Thematic Group dealing with Biodiversity Conservation was carried for the assessment of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity. The results of the assessment are reported in Document CRF(LV)/4.
- The assessment of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative analyzed the achievements of sixteen ITTO projects by two international consultants, Dr Ian Thompson from Canada and Prof Juergen Blaser from Switzerland, who was recommended by the CBD Secretariat.

- The 16 projects implemented through the ITTO-CBD initiative included four in Africa, six in Asia-Pacific, five in Central/South America, and one in Oceania. Six completed projects were highly successful by accomplishing 90% or more of the objectives. These include Cambodia-Thailand transboundary project, Indonesia and Malaysia transboundary project, Peru Biosphere Reserve Project, Benin Ramsar Areas project, and a forestry engineer training programme implemented by RIFFEAC in sub-Saharan Africa.
- The main lessons of the ex-post evaluation, which can be applied in the framework of a renewed Initiative, include
 - Capacity building and awareness-raising for local communities and local government officials is essential for improving area management and needs of local communities must be understood prior to implementation.
 - High-level political support in the governments of all participating countries is essential to the success of a transboundary conservation project.
 - Projects must provide measurable indicators for achievement and have the means to conduct to monitor them.
- The technical assessment concluded that there is no doubt that the ITTO-CBD Initiative was remarkably successful and should be continued in a renewed form. Furthermore, the assessment recommended focusing on more limited types of projects would improve impact, including transboundary areas, buffer zones near protected areas, degraded second-growth forest landscapes that are important to local communities and indigenous people.
- The Secretariat has worked with the CBD Secretariat to produce a joint policy brief highlighting the results of the technical assessment of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative. The technical assessment report will be published as an ITTO technical series for wider dissemination.

The Delegation of the United States supported the suggestion in the technical assistance report that the lessons learned and the different projects under taken by the ITTO-CBD Initiative be incorporated into the ITTO communication strategy. In relation to her question about the CBD's financial contribution(s) to the ITTO-CBD Initiative, the Secretariat responded that one of the 16 projects under the ITTO-CBD Initiative received partial support from the CBD Secretariat and that the recently renewed collaboration between ITTO and CBD explores more opportunities for CBD contribution.

The Delegation of Japan commended the technical assessment report of the ITTO-CBD Initiative. He noted that Japan is one of the largest donors to the 16 projects of the ITTO-CBD Initiative and highlighted the importance of enhancing collaboration with partners in the global biodiversity conservation community, including CBD COPs.

The Committee commended the two international consultants on the comprehensive technical assessment of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity and recommended expanding the activities of the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative to contribute to the achievements of the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework.

(B) Selection of Projects for Ex-post Evaluations 2022-2023 [Document CRF(LV)/5]

The Secretariat recalled the Committee that the shortlist of ex-post evaluations 2018-2019 was extended for the period of 2020-2021 and the Thematic Group Evaluation on Biodiversity Conservation was conducted in 2020 and 2021 through an intensive desk review of the 16 projects, which had been implemented under the ITTO-CBD Collaborative Initiative for Tropical Forest Biodiversity. In the case of the Thematic Group Evaluation on Forest Rehabilitation / Landscape Restoration / Secondary Forest Management, it was rescheduled to 2022, because of the COVID-19 travel restrictions not allowing field visits of the target areas of completed projects.

The Secretariat also informed the Committee that for the preparation of the 8th Session of the Tokyo International Conference for African Development (TICAD-8), to be held in summer 2022, a regional group ex-post evaluation work will be carried out for assessing the achievements of completed ITTO projects in Africa, with the aim to find main relevant findings and outcomes for future forestry-related implications of the Government of Japan in Africa.

The Committee took note the Secretariat will prepare a planning of the ex-post evaluation of Thematic Groups in 2022, with a priority to be given to the ex-post evaluation of projects in Africa for the preparation of TICAD-8, as well as to the Thematic Group Evaluation on Forest Rehabilitation / Landscape Restoration / Secondary Forest Management in collaboration with an ITTO partner to be selected among relevant institutions dealing with forest landscape restoration/rehabilitation (FLR).

Item 10 – Review of Projects, Pre-projects and Special Biennial Work Programme-based Activities in Progress

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

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

10.1 Projects

The Committee took note of the status of projects that had been approved by the Council, as contained in Document CRF(LV)/3, as categorized: (A) projects under implementation (nine projects); (B) projects awaiting implementation agreement (one project); (C) projects awaiting financing (fourteen projects) and (D) projects to be subject to termination process.

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

(A) Projects under implementation

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

The Committee took note that the Executing Agency (PNG Forest Authority) submitted the long-delayed financial audit reports for the fiscal years 2017 and 2018 in October 2021 and the audit reports for the fiscal years 2019 and 2020 on 24 November. Therefore, the termination of the project is not recommended. The delay of submitting the audit reports was partly due to the impacts of the COVID 19 pandemic, including the sickness of finance staff and a 10-day office closure in October 2021.

The Committee urged the Executing Agency to redouble its efforts towards the effective and successful completion of the project before the end of March 2022, as well as the timely submission of the final audit report that fully complies with the ITTO audit guidelines.

2) PD 721/13 Rev.3 (F) Building a Participatory and Inclusive Sustainable Forest Management Process for the Reduction of Deforestation and Forest Degradation in the Ixil Forest Areas of the Municipality of Nebaj, Quiché, Guatemala (Guatemala)

The Committee took note that this project had been implemented by CALMECAC (*Fundación para el Desarrollo Integral del Hombre y Entorno*) for the enhancement of sustainable forest management skills of local community forest organizations in the Municipality of Nebaj, Quiché, with a view to reducing deforestation and forest degradation in the Xaclbal watershed area, in Guatemala.

The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Completion Report, Technical Reports and the Final Financial Audit Report had been delivered by the Executing Agency in accordance with the Project Agreement. The Committee therefore decided to consider the project PD 721/13 Rev.3 (F) as completed.

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

The Committee took note that this project had been implemented by FCG (*Fundación para la Conservación de los Recursos Naturales y Ambiente en Guatemala*) in collaboration with INAB (*Instituto Nacional de Bosques*) for improving forest landscape restoration actions through the implementation of a forest restoration mechanism based on ITTO guidelines with the broad participation of key stakeholders in prioritized strategic ecosystems in Guatemala. This project completed all activities in mid-2021. However, submission of the completion report and final financial audit (expected to be submitted by September 2021 in accordance

with the project agreement and agreed extension) has been delayed beyond the time of finalization of Committee documents due to several members of the project team being directly impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Committee also took note that Secretariat proposed to report the project PD 765/14 Rev.4 (F) under the Committee's "Completed Projects" agenda item during its 56th Session in 2022.

4) PD 836/17 Rev.2 (F) Enhancing Capacity of Local Communities and Forest Administration to Effectively Implement Community Forestry Programme (CFP) in Kratie and Mondulkiri Provinces of Cambodia (Cambodia)

The Committee took note that the Implementing Agency revised the project document based on the available project funds and the revised project was approved in February 2021. Upon completion of the project agreement and all administrative arrangements for project implementation, the Implementing Agency began project activities in October 2021. The Implementing Agency organized a project launching ceremony and workshop on 16 November with the participation of key stakeholders and donor representatives to promote community forestry partnerships in the country. Existing technical manuals for the development of community forestry plans are being reviewed and initiation work is under way for the establishment of a community forestry communication forum with the support of partners.

(B) Projects awaiting implementation agreement

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

The Committee took note that the Implementing Agency revised the project document in Phase I and Phase II, taking into account the project funds available for immediate implementation. Phase I was approved in September 2021 through an online no-objection procedure. The draft project agreement regulating the implementation of Phase I of the project was sent to the Implementing Agency in October 2021 for review. The Secretariat looked forward to effective arrangements, including the finalization of the project agreement and the establishment of a competent project team, for the early commencement of project implementation.

(C) Projects awaiting financing

The Committee noted that the following fourteen projects approved at earlier and current sessions were still awaiting funding, out of which six projects with an asterisk (*) will be sunset between the 55th and 56th CRF Sessions if funding is not made available. The Secretariat updated the status of PD 849/17 Rev.2 (F) and PD 902/19 Rev.2 (F).

- 1) PD 712/13 Rev.3 (F) Enhancing the Implementation of Landscape Management of Giam Siak Kecil-Bukit Batu Biosphere Reserve (GSK-BR) in Riau Province of Sumatra Island, Sumatra - Phase II (Indonesia)
- 2) PD 723/13 Rev.2 (F)* Capacity Building for Strengthening Transboundary Biodiversity Conservation of the Taninthayi Range in Myanmar – Phase I Stage 2 (Myanmar)
- 3) PD 765/14 Rev.4 (F) Development of A Forest Landscape Restoration Program for Guatemala Based on ITTO Guidelines – Phase II (Guatemala)
- 4) PD 808/16 Rev.4 (F) Conservation of African Barwood (*Pterocarpus Erinaceus Poir*) in the Gazetted Forests of La Palee and Boundiali in Northern Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of Local Communities (Côte d'Ivoire)
- 5) PD 818/16 Rev.4 (F) "BOSS - CUSHABATAY" Project – Forest Management and Restoration in the Cushabatay Basin on the Eastern Slope of the Cordillera Azul National Park (PNCAZ), Peru (Peru)
- 6) PD 849/17 Rev.2 (F) Increasing Commercial Reforestation Competitiveness in Costa Rica (Costa Rica)
(Note: partially funded during the 54th ITTC)

The Committee took note that the project was partially funded with an amount of US\$100,000 from the United States during the ITTC 54 in November 2018. Prior to the ITTC-57, the project received additional funding of US\$235,765 from Japan for its full implementation. Therefore, the Executing Agency is encouraged to facilitate the finalization of the draft project agreement that the Secretariat will send soon. The Delegation of Japan looked forward to the early start of the implementation of the project to support restoration in Costa Rica.

- 7) PD 890/18 Rev.3 (F) Rehabilitation of the Upper Bandama Gazetted Forest in the North of Côte d'Ivoire with the Participation of the Local People (Côte d'Ivoire)
- 8) PD 896/19 Rev.2 (F)* Protection and Restoration of Forested Water Catchment, Regulation and Recharge Areas in the Upper Salinas River Watershed, Guatemala, to Ensure Water Supply for Guatemalan Communities (Guatemala)
- 9) PD 901/19 Rev.2 (F)* Promoting Conservation and Community-Based Management of Mangrove Ecosystems Through Integrating Adaptation and Mitigation Action in Karang Gading and Langkat Timur Laut (KG-LTLWR) Reserve, North Sumatera, Indonesia (Indonesia)
- 10) PD 902/19 Rev.2 (F)* Management of Upper Baram Forest Area for Conservation and Sustainable Development with Involvement of Local Communities, Upper Baram, Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)

The Committee took note that the project was approved in October 2020 to support the sustainable management of the Upper Baram Forest Area of about 283,500 ha, which is the Penan Peace Park, for biodiversity conservation and socio-economic development of local communities especially four ethnic communities in 26 villages. So far, the project has obtained an amount of US\$ 400,000 with the contributions of the Bruno Manser Funds and the City of Basel, Switzerland with an amount of US\$ 200,000 each. The project is currently awaiting additional funds for its implementation. If the project secures around US\$200,000, the Implementing Agency can start the project with a revised budget.

The Delegation of Switzerland pointed out that the project received financial support from an NGO and a local government in Switzerland and hoped that the remaining balance would be secured. The Delegation of Malaysia thanked the Bruno Manser Funds and the City of Basel, Switzerland for financing. However, he requested that ITTO's line of communication for project implementation be channeled with the ITTO focal point in Malaysia, the Ministry of Plantation Industries and Commodities. The Secretariat responded that ITTO has established a close relationship with the Forest Department Sarawak in the implementation of ITTO projects and that ITTO communication will be channeled through the ITTO focal point in Malaysia.

- 11) PD 903/19 Rev.2 (F)* Management of Sungai Menyang Conservation Area for Orangutan Protection and Uplifting Community Livelihood, Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)
- 12) PD 904/19 Rev.2 (F)* Restoring Productivity in Post-Logging Hill Forests by Enrichment Planting in Sarawak, Malaysia (Malaysia)
- 13) PD 905/19 Rev.2 (F) Providing Support for the Sustainable Management of the Fosse-aux-Lions Gazetted Forest in the Savanna Region in Togo (Togo)
- 14) PD 916/21 Rev.1 (F) Pilot Sustainable Management Systems for Secondary Natural Forests in the Collective Afro-descendant Community Territory of the Bajo Calima Community Council, Municipality of Buenaventura, Colombia (Colombia)

(D) Projects to be subject to possible termination process

In accordance with the rules and procedures applying to ITTO projects, the Committee considered recommending the termination of the following projects because of the non-submission of the final financial audit reports notwithstanding the specification of the project agreements on the submission of financial audit reports.

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

The Committee took note that the letter No.L.21-0087 of 15 June 2021 was sent to the project implementing agency (FDA-Liberia), as the final notice regarding the urgent need to submit the completion report and final financial audit report, in due time, for the completion and closure process by the ITTO Secretariat. As the project implementing agency did not submit the completion report and final financial audit report, the project PD 507/08 Rev.1 (F) has been recommended for the termination process to the International Tropical Timber Council (ITTC), as provided for in Article X of the Project Agreement.

The Delegation of Switzerland had no objection to recommend this project to the ITTC for the termination process and expressed the disappointment for the non-submission of the completion report and final financial report which could allow the normal closure process in compliance with the rules and procedures of ITTO.

The Committee recommended to the Council for the termination process of the project in accordance with the rules of ITTO. The Committee also noted that the project implementing agency (FDA-Liberia) shall not get any more ITTO-funded projects in the future until they comply with the reporting requirements.

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

The Committee took note that the letter No.L.21-0108 of 30 June 2021 was sent to the implementing agency (PICODEV-Ghana), as the final notice regarding the urgent need to submit the final financial audit report, in due time, for the completion and closure process by the ITTO Secretariat. However, the project implementing agency (PICODEV-Ghana) submitted the final financial audit report beyond the time of finalization of Committee documents, and it was forwarded to the Division of Operations for review.

The Committee also took note that Secretariat proposed to report the project PD 653/12 Rev.1 (F) under the Committee's "Completed Projects" agenda item during its 56th Session in 2022.

3) PD 764/14 Rev.3 (F) Enabling Customary Landowners to Participate Effectively in Community Forest Management Schemes Within 6 Pilot Areas of PNG (PNG)

The Committee took note that the Executing Agency (PNG Forest Authority) submitted the delayed financial audit report for the fiscal year 2020 in October 2021. The ITTO finance team reviewed this audit report as satisfactory. Therefore, the termination of the project is not recommended.

The Delegation of Japan commended the work of PNG Forest Authority in submitting the delayed financial audits for this project and PD 552/09 Rev.1 (F) that is also being implemented in PNG. He reiterated the importance of fulfilling the financial accountability of the two PNG projects in a timely manner in accordance with the ITTO audit guidelines.

The Committee urged the Executing Agency to submit the financial audit report for the fiscal year 2021 before the end of March 2022 in accordance with the ITTO audit guidelines.

10.2 Pre-projects

The Committee took note of the status of approved pre-projects, as contained in Document CRF(LV)/3.

(A) Pre-projects under implementation

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

- 1) PPD 189/17 Rev.3 (F) Development of A Full Project Proposal to Generate Tools to Ensure the Establishment of Timber Forest Species through Natural Regeneration in the Province of Tahuamanu, Peru (Peru)
- 2) PPD 196/19 Rev.1 (F) Support for Operational and Planning Capacity-building for Stakeholders in the Private and Community Forestry Sector in Togo (Togo)

(B) Pre-projects awaiting implementation agreement

None.

(C) Pre-projects awaiting financing

The Committee noted that three pre-projects were still awaiting funding:
Pre-Project with an asterisk (*) will become sunset between the 55th and 56th CRF Sessions.

- 1) PPD 197/20 Rev.1 (F)* Development of a Project for the Revaluation, Restoration and Sustainable Development of the Quina (*Cinchona spp.*) Tree and Associate Native Species of the Western Montane Forests of Peru (Peru)
- 2) PPD 198/21 Rev.1 (F) Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin (Benin)
- 3) PPD 201/21 Rev.1 (F) Study for Capacity Building of Private and Community Tree Farmers in Benin (Benin)

10.3 Biennial Work Programme-based Activities

1) PP-A/53-323 Capacity building for the implementation of “Legal and Sustainable Supply Chains (LSSC)” by stakeholders in the Congo Basin countries

The Committee noted that the delay in the implementation of the German-funded BMEL-ITTO Activity 5, due to the travel and meeting restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic in Congo Basin countries, led to the extension of the implementation period until March 2022 and correlated modification of the ITTO budget. It was also noted that the draft of the single document of compilation of the results of four LSSC-related training programs, developed through the implementation of the German-funded BMEL-ITTO Activity 5, will be subject to review by experts to be gathered in a regional workshop for its technical validation in December and it will also be subject to dissemination in ITTO member countries in Congo Basin through training workshops, during the first quarter of 2022.

2) PP-A/56-340-1 Capacity Building on Forest and Land Fire Management in Indonesia

The Committee took note that the project has organized a series of fire prevention and management training courses in Central Kalimantan, South Kalimantan and South Sumatera. It is also developing a zero burn practices module and fire management procedure to promote best agricultural waste management practices. The project has collaborated with the IPB University in Bogor to develop a SMART Patrol information system and organize a monthly webinar. So far, five monthly webinars have been organized to share lessons from the implementation of forest fire policies and programs in Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on Indonesia. Each of the five webinars was attended by more than 150 participants. The Secretariat looked forward to the efficient and successful implementation of the project.

3) PP-A/56-340-2 Forest Fire Prevention and Response in Tropical Forests and Forest Plantations in Peru

The Committee took note that selection of eleven (11) main consultants was delayed and finalized in July 2021 because of the requirement, for SERFOR, to comply with the provisions of the national contracting legislation in force in Peru. The delay in selecting these main consultants combined with the travel and meeting restrictions linked to the COVID-19 pandemic in Peru, led to the low-level execution of most project activities, so that the conditions for the extension of the project implementation duration shall be discussed between all parties during December 2021.

4) PP-A/56-341 Support for Women’s Groups with the Restoration of Forest Landscapes in the Prefectures of Blitta and Lacs, Togo

The Committee noted that this pilot phase has contributed to food security, including food crops derived from agroforestry activities, while empowering women groups involved in the restoration activities in the Prefectures of Blitta and Lacs (Togo). It was also noted that the concept note for the Phase 2 of this BWP

related Activity has been prepared by REFACOF and shared with the financial donor, Soka Gakkai, for supporting the request for funds needed to consolidate and sustain the achievements of the pilot phase.

Item 11 - Election of Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson for 2022

Ms. Siti Syaliza Mustapha (Malaysia) was elected as the Chairperson of the CRF for 2022. The Vice-Chairperson of the Committee for 2022 would be announced by the consumer caucus at a later date.

Item 12 - Dates and Venues of the Fifty-sixth and Fifty-seventh Sessions of the Committee

The Fifty-sixth Session of the Committee will be held in conjunction with the Fifty-eighth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2022.

The Fifty-seventh Session of the Committee will be held in conjunction with the Fifty-ninth Session of the International Tropical Timber Council in 2023.

Item 13 - Other Business

None.

Item 14 - Recommendations to the International Tropical Timber Council

- (A) The Committee recommended that funding be made immediately available for the following project and pre-projects approved under the Project Cycle 2021:

Project

PD 916/21 Rev.1 (F)	Pilot Sustainable Management Systems for Secondary Natural Forests in the Collective Afro-descendant Community Territory of the Bajo Calima Community Council, Municipality of Buenaventura, Colombia [ITTO Budget: US\$ 578,185]
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Pre-projects

PPD 198/21 Rev.1 (F)	Study for the Restoration and Sustainable Management of Gallery Forests in the Mono Delta Biosphere Reserve in Benin [ITTO Budget: US\$ 91,504]
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PPD 201/21 Rev.1 (F)	Study for Capacity Building of Private and Community Tree Farmers in Benin [ITTO Budget: US\$ 81,984]
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- (B) The Committee recommended the termination of the project PD 507/08 Rev.1 (F), as recommended by the Secretariat, in accordance with the rules and procedures applying to ITTO projects.

- (C) The Committee recommended that the draft set of ITTO C&I for sustainable forest management adapted to Africa context should be made available on ITTO website, as Document CRF(LV)/6, for comments by ITTO Members until mid-December 2021.

Item 15 - Report of the Session

The Committee accepted this Report for submission to the Council.

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